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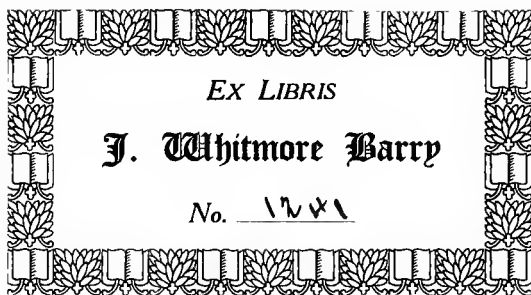


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VIRGIN SOIL.

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BY

I. S. TOURGÉNIEF.

TRANSLATED BY

ASHTON W. DILKE.

London :

MACMILLAN AND CO.

1878.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

A LONG preface is a great evil, besides which Tourgénief, thanks to some able translations, now needs no introduction to English readers. His last work possesses a special interest at this moment, arising from the fact that it treats of those secret societies of which we have heard so much and know so little. Fiction may well be a valuable adjunct to more serious work, and I venture to think that those who read this novel with understanding may retain a more correct impression of Russian Socialism than many who have studied the question through the light of correspondent or essayist. The work of translation has been a pleasure to me; and my pleasure will be greatly enhanced if I think that the pub-

lication of this work may lead a single Englishman to a better acquaintance with a noble and deeply maligned people, which has suffered long, but for which the dawn of freedom at last seems breaking, as ever, in misery and bloodshed. When it is remembered that this book was written before the Turko-Russian War broke out, some of its sentences read almost like prophecies. I may add that the writer's impartiality is proved by the fact that Conservatives and Socialists are alike ill pleased with their own portraits and those of their adversaries.

Algiers, April, 1878.

VIRGIN SOIL.

CHAPTER I.

ONE afternoon in the spring of the year 1868, between twelve and one, a young man, some seven-and-twenty years old, carelessly and poorly dressed, was climbing up the dark backstairs of a five-story house in the Ophitsérskaia Street in St. Petersburg. Shuffling heavily in his worn-down goloshes, and slowly swinging his ponderous, clumsy body, he at length reached the top of the staircase, stopped before a dilapidated door which was standing ajar, then rolled into a narrow dark passage without ringing the bell, but heaving a loud sigh.

"Is Nejdánof in?" he called, in a loud, hoarse voice.

"He is not, I am here; come in," answered from the adjoining room another voice, a woman's, also rather rough.

"Mashúrina?" asked the new-comer.

"She herself. Are you Ostrodúmof?"

"Pímen Ostrodúmof," he answered, and first carefully removing his goloshes, and hanging his shabby cloak on a nail, he entered the room whence the woman's voice had proceeded.

It was a low, untidy room, with the walls painted a

dirty green, and dimly lighted by two dusty windows. The only furniture in it was an iron bedstead in a corner, a table in the middle, a few chairs, and an *étagère* piled up with books. By the table sat a woman of thirty, without a bonnet, in a black woollen dress, smoking a cigarette. On seeing Ostrodúmof come in, she gave him her broad red hand in silence. He shook it, also in silence, and, dropping on to a chair, pulled out of his pocket a half-crushed cigar. Mashúrina gave him a light, he took it, and set to work emitting jets of blueish smoke into the dim atmosphere of the room, which was already considerably overcharged. Not a word was spoken, nor even a look exchanged.

The faces of the smokers did not resemble each other, yet in their plain countenances, with their thick lips, large teeth, and flat noses (Ostrodúmof in addition was pitted with small-pox), there was a common expression which told of honesty and hard-working determination.

“Have you seen Nejdánof?” said Ostrodúmof at last.

“I have; he will be here directly. He is taking books to the library.”

“Why has he taken to running about so much lately?” said Ostrodúmof, spitting aside; “there is no getting hold of him.”

Mashúrina took out another cigarette. “He is dull,” she said, as she lit it carefully.

“Dull?” repeated Ostrodúmof, reproachfully. “Spoilt child! One would think that none of us had anything to do. Here we are, God grant we may get through all the work properly—and he is dull!”

“Has the letter from Moscow come?” asked Mashúrina, after a pause.

“It came the day before yesterday.”

“Have you read it?”

Ostrodúmof only nodded his head.

“ Well, and what news ? ”

“ We shall soon have to go.”

Mashúrina took the cigarette out of her mouth.

“ What is that for ? Everything is going on well there, as far as one can hear.”

“ Everything is going on much as usual. Only one of their men has turned out untrustworthy. So there—he must be changed, perhaps even altogether removed. And there are other matters. They want you as well.”

“ Do they say so in the letter ? ”

“ Yes ; in the letter.”

Mashúrina tossed back her thick hair, which, carelessly twisted up behind, fell in front over her forehead and eyebrows.

“ Well,” she said, “ if the order comes, there is no arguing.”

“ Of course not. Only without money we can do nothing ; and where are we to find that same money ? ”

Mashúrina became thoughtful.

“ Nejdánof must find it,” she at last said, in a low voice, as if to herself.

“ I have come about that very matter,” remarked Ostrodúmof.

“ Have you got the letter ? ” suddenly asked Mashúrina.

“ Yes. Would you like to read it ? ”

“ Give it here ; or—stop. I don’t want it. We will read it together, afterwards.”

“ I am not mistaken,” growled Ostrodúmof. “ Don’t doubt it.”

“ I do not doubt it.”

Both became silent again, and once more the jets of smoke sprang from their lips, and rose in gentle curls above their rough heads.

The sound of footsteps was heard in the passage.

“ There he is,” whispered Mashúrina.

The door opened slightly, and a head was thrust in, only it was not Nejdánof's.

It was a round little head, with coarse black hair, a broad wrinkled forehead and restless grey eyes under thick brows; a snub nose like a duck's bill, and a small, pink, queerly cut mouth. The little head looked round, nodded, laughed—showing a multitude of tiny white teeth—and came into the room, followed by a small body with short arms and crooked, limping legs. At the sight of this head, the faces of both Mashúrina and Ostrodúmof expressed a kind of condescending contempt, just as if they had said to themselves, "Oh! only he!" And they did not let fall a single word—did not even move. However, the reception shown him, far from confusing the new arrival, apparently afforded him a certain pleasure.

"What does this mean?" he said in a shrill voice. "A duet? Why not a trio? And where is the chief tenor?"

"You are inquiring after Nejdánof, Mr. Páklín?" said Ostrodúmof, with a grave air.

"Just so, Mr. Ostrodúmof; after Nejdánof."

"He will probably be here soon, Mr. Páklín."

"I am delighted to hear it, Mr. Ostrodúmof."

"The little lame man turned to Mashúrina, who was sitting hunched up and was steadily going on with her cigarette.

"How do you do, my dear—my dear— How tiresome! I always forget your names."*

Mashúrina shrugged her shoulders. "It is quite unnecessary for you to know! You know my surname. What do you want more? And what a question, 'How do you do?' † You can surely see that I am living."

* Russians do not use the surname in addressing a person, but the Christian name and patronymic.

† Literally, "How are you living?"

“Quite right! quite right!” exclaimed Páklin, puffing out his nostrils and working his eyebrows up and down. “Otherwise your humble servant would not be enjoying the pleasure of seeing and talking with you here. Put down my question to ingrained bad habit. Then, as to your Christian name and father’s name, you know, it is a little awkward to say right out—Mashúrina! True, I know that you always sign your letters simply Bonaparte—I mean Mashúrina—but somehow in conversation—”

“But who wants you to converse with me?”

Páklin laughed nervously, as if he were choking. “Well, that will do, my dear. Give me your hand, and don’t be angry. You are so good; and I, too, am not a bad fellow. Eh?”

Páklin held out his hand. Mashúrina looked at him sullenly, but gave him hers.

“If you insist upon knowing my name,” she continued, with the same sullen air, “all right. It is Thékla.”

“And mine Pímen,” added Ostrodúmof, in his deep voice.

“Oh! that is very, very . . . instructive! But in that case tell me, O Thékla, and you, O Pímen, tell me why you both so persistently keep me at a distance, while I—”

“Mashúrina thinks,” interrupted Ostrodúmof—“and she is not the only one—that as you look at all matters from their laughable side, one cannot rely upon you.”

Páklin turned sharp round on his heels.

“There it is; there is the one mistake which all who judge me make, worthy Pímen. Firstly, I am not always laughing; secondly, it does no harm, and I can be trusted, as is proved by the flattering confidence which has more than once been shown me in your own ranks! I am an honourable man, worthy Pímen!”

Ostrodúmof muttered something between his teeth;

but Páklin shook his head, and repeated, this time without any smile, "No, I am not always laughing. I am by no means a jovial man! Just look at me!"

Ostrodúmof looked at him. Truly enough, when Páklin was neither laughing nor talking, his face took an expression almost of misery, almost of fear. It became amusing, and even wicked, as soon as he opened his mouth. Ostrodúmof, however, said nothing.

Páklin again turned to Mashúrina. "Well, and how do your studies get on? Are you achieving successes in your truly philanthropic science? I expect it is a hard business, that of assisting the inexperienced citizen in his first introduction to the light of day?"

"No, there is not much trouble, if he is no bigger than you," answered Mashúrina, with a self-satisfied smile. Mashúrina had just passed an examination in midwifery. A year and a half before this she had left her family, poor nobles in Southern Russia, had come to Petersburg with six roubles in her pocket, had entered a lying-in hospital, and, by incessant work, had gained the desired certificate. She was a maiden, and a very virtuous maiden. Not a wonderful thing! may exclaim some sceptic, remembering what has been said about her appearance. A wonderful and a rare thing, we may be allowed to say.

Hearing her answer, Páklin again laughed. "You are a sharp girl, my dear," he exclaimed; "put me down splendidly! Served me right! Why did I remain such a dwarf! But what has become of our host?"

Páklin had his reasons for changing the conversation. He had never been able to reconcile himself to the smallness of his stature, to his decidedly unattractive little figure, and he felt it the more because he was very fond of the society of women. What would he not have given to have found favour in their eyes! The consciousness of his miserable appearance tor-

mented him far more than his low birth or his unenviable position in society. Páklin's father was a mere tradesman, who by all manner of trickery had worked his way up to the rank of Honorary Councillor;* a busybody always eager after law-suits, after stewardships of estates and of houses. Thus he turned a penny, but drank hard towards the end of his life, and at his death left nothing behind him. Young Páklin (his name was Síla—Síla Samsónitch,† which he also considered a satire) was brought up in a commercial school, where he learnt German perfectly. After a series of almost unbearable struggles, he found himself at last in a private office on a salary of 1,500 roubles a year.‡

With this money he kept himself, a sick aunt, and a hunchbacked sister. At the time our story begins he was only just entering his twenty-eighth year. He was acquainted with a number of young students, whom he pleased by his cynical audacity, by the amusing bile of his self-satisfied talk, and by his undoubted information, which, though one-sided, was free from pedantry. Only now and then did he get the worst of it. On one occasion he somehow came late to a "political" meeting; on entering he began hurriedly to excuse himself. . . . "A bit of a coward was our poor Páklin," sang some one in the corner, and every one laughed. Páklin himself at length joined in the laugh, though secretly much put out. "The scoundrel is right," he thought to himself. He became acquainted with Nejdánof in a Greek cook-shop, where he was in the habit of dining, and where he sometimes expressed extremely free and startling opinions. He maintained that the chief cause of his democratic tendency was the bad Greek cookery, which had ruined his liver.

* One of the lowest ranks of the official hierarchy.

† The name means strength, son of Samson.

‡ At the time this story was written, about seven roubles were equivalent to a pound sterling.

“Yes; what has become of our host?” repeated Páklin. “I have noticed that lately he has been quite out of sorts. I hope he is not in love. Heaven fore-fend!”

Mashúrina frowned. “He has gone to the library for books; and as for falling in love, he can neither find the time nor the person.”

“What if you were the person?” almost broke from Páklin’s lips. “I want to see him,” he said, aloud, “because I have to speak with him about a most important cause.”

“What cause?” interrupted Ostrodúmof. “Ours?”

“Possibly yours—I mean ours, our common cause.”

Ostrodúmof grunted. In his heart he doubted, but instantly thought, “Deuce knows, it may be: the fellow pokes his nose everywhere.”

“And here he comes at last,” suddenly said Mashúrina, and in her small and common-place eyes, which were turned towards the door of the passage, there flitted a something warm and tender, a spark of inward brightness

The door opened, and this time there came in a young man of twenty-three, with his cap on his head, and a parcel of books under his arm: Nejdánof himself.

CHAPTER II.

AT the sight of the visitors who were in his room he stopped on the threshold, glanced round at them, threw off his cap, dropped the books straight on to the floor, and walking up to his bed, sat down on the edge of it without a word. His handsome pale face, rendered even paler by the deep red tinge of his wavy hair, expressed displeasure and vexation.

Mashúrina slightly turned away and bit her lip ; Ostrodúmof grumbled, " At last ! "

Páklin was the first to approach Nejdánof. " What is the matter with you, Alexéi Dmítievitch, you Russian Hamlet ? Has any one vexed you ? or are you merely sad without any reason ? "

" Do stop, please, you Russian Mephistopheles," answered Nejdánof irritably. " I am not in the humour to bandy dull witticisms with you."

Páklin laughed.

" You express yourself inaccurately. What is witty cannot be dull ; what is dull cannot be witty."

" Oh, all right ; you are a clever fellow, we all know that."

" And your nerves are out of order," said Páklin, slowly. " No, really ; has anything happened ? "

" Nothing particular has happened ; what has

happened is that it is impossible to put one's nose out of doors in this vile town, in Petersburg, without stumbling over some meanness, some stupidity, some grotesque injustice, some nonsense! Life here has become impossible."

"Ah! that is why you advertised in the papers that you were seeking a tutorship, and were prepared to leave town," again grumbled Ostrodúmof.

"Of course. I should leave it with the greatest possible pleasure if only some one could be found fool enough to offer me a place."

"One ought first to fulfil one's duty *here*," said Mashúrina significantly, continuing meanwhile to look away.

"What do you mean?" said Nejdánof, turning abruptly to her. Mashúrina pressed her lips tighter.

"Ostrodúmof will tell you," she said.

Nejdánof turned to Ostrodúmof; but he only grunted and coughed, as much as to say, "Wait a bit."

"No, seriously, without joking," broke in Páklin, "have you learned something—some bad news?"

Nejdánof sprang from the bed as if something had stung him. "What other bad news do you want?" he cried, in an unexpectedly ringing tone.

"Half Russia is dying of hunger; the *Moscow Gazette* is triumphant, and trying to introduce classical education; the students' benefit societies are being closed; everywhere are spies, persecutions, denunciations, lies, and deceit; one cannot step in any direction . . . and all this is not enough for him: he expects some fresh bad news; he thinks I am joking . . . Basánof is arrested," he added, dropping his voice slightly; "they told me at the library."

Ostrodúmof and Mashúrina simultaneously raised their heads.

"My dear friend, Alexéi Dmítrievitch," began

Páklin, "you are excited. I can quite understand it. . . . But have you forgotten in what times and in what a country we are living? With us it is the drowning man that must provide the straw for himself to catch at. Is this a time to be soft-hearted? No, brother, we must learn to look the devil in the face, and not to be fractious like children!"

"Oh, enough, enough," said Nejdánof, impatiently, and his face contracted, literally as if he were in pain. "Every one knows you for an energetic man, you fear nothing and no one . . ."

"I fear no one?" began Páklin.

"But who could have betrayed Basánof?" continued Nejdánof; "I do not understand."

"Why, a friend, of course! They are good hands at that, are friends. In their company keep your ears open. I, for instance, had a friend, and he seemed a good fellow; interested himself so much about me and my reputation. He comes to me one day: 'Imagine,' he cries, 'what an absurd report people are spreading about you! They say that you poisoned your uncle; that you were introduced into a certain house, and that you immediately sat down with your back to the hostess, and sat thus the whole evening, while she was crying, absolutely crying at the insult! Can you imagine such nonsense, such stuff? What fools can believe such things?' Well, a year after I quarrelled with that same friend, and in his farewell letter to me he wrote: 'You, who made away with your uncle! you who were not ashamed to insult a respectable lady by turning your back to her!' and so on, and so on. That's what friends are like!"

Ostrodúmof glanced at Mashúrína.

"Alexéi Dmitriévitch!" he broke out, in his deep bass—he evidently wished to stop the useless quibbling which had arisen. "A letter has come from Vasíli Nikoláévitch at Moscow."

Nejdánof slightly shuddered and sank into thought. "What does he say?" he at length asked.

"Well, she and I"—Ostrodúmof pointed at Mashúrina by raising his eyebrows—"must go."

"What, she as well?"

"She as well."

"What are you waiting for?"

"The usual thing—money."

Nejdánof rose from the bed and walked to the window.

"How much do you want?"

"Fifty roubles . . . we can't do with less."

Nejdánof was silent.

"I have not got them now," he at length whispered, tapping on the window with his nails; "but I can get them. I will get them. Have you the letter?"

"The letter? It . . . that is . . . of course . . ."

"Now, why is it that you conceal everything from me?" exclaimed Páklin. "Can it be that I have not gained your confidence. Even if I do not fully sympathize with—your undertaking, can you possibly imagine that I am capable of betraying you, or chattering?"

"Unintentionally, perhaps," said Ostrodúmof.

"Neither intentionally or unintentionally. There is Miss Mashúrina looking at me and smiling; yet I will say . . ."

"I am not smiling in the least," said Mashúrina, snappishly.

"—Yet I will say," continued Páklin, "that you, gentlemen, have no keenness of scent. You cannot distinguish who are your real friends! A man laughs, and so you think he cannot be serious."

"Perhaps not," again put in Mashúrina.

"For instance," resumed Páklin, with fresh vigour, not even answering Mashúrina. "You are in want of money, and Nejdánof has none at present. Well, I can let you have it."

Nejdánof turned abruptly from the window.

"No, no ; why should you ? I will get it. I will draw a part of my pension in advance. I remember *they* owe me some money. And now, Ostrodúmof, show us the letter."

Ostrodúmof at first remained motionless ; then looking round he rose, and, bending his whole body, turned up his trousers, and took from inside his boot a carefully folded sheet of blue paper ; having taken it out, for some unknown reason he blew upon it, then handed it to Nejdánof.

The latter took the letter, opened it, read it carefully, and passed it to Mashúrina. She first rose from her chair, then also read it and gave it back to Nejdánof, though Páklin stretched his hand out for it. Nejdánof shrugged his shoulders and gave him the mysterious letter. Páklin in his turn glanced over the letter, and, closing his lips impressively, laid it quietly and solemnly on the table. Then Ostrodúmof took it, lighted a large match, which emitted a strong smell of sulphur, and having first raised the letter high above his head, as if showing it to all present, he burnt it to ashes in the match, without sparing his fingers, and threw the ashes into the stove. No one said a word ; no one even moved during this operation. All sat with their eyes cast down. Ostrodúmof had a concentrated and determined expression ; Nejdánof's face seemed hard ; Páklin was all attention ; Mashúrina seemed in ecstasy.

So passed a couple of minutes ; after which they all felt rather uncomfortable. Páklin first saw the necessity of breaking the silence.

"Well," he began, "is my sacrifice on the altar of my country accepted or not ? am I to be allowed to contribute, if not the whole fifty, at any rate twenty-five or thirty roubles to the common cause ?"

Nejdánof suddenly broke out. It seemed as if his

vexation had boiled over. The solemn burning of the letter had not diminished it, and it waited but an excuse to overflow. "I have already told you, I don't want it, don't want it, don't want it! I won't allow it, and won't take it. I will find the money—will find it at once. I need help from no one."

"Well, brother," said Páklin, "I see though you are a revolutionist you are no democrat."

"You had better call me an aristocrat outright."

"So you are an aristocrat—to a certain extent."

Nejdánof laughed uneasily. "That is, you wish to hint at my being illegitimate. You are troubling yourself for nothing, my friend. I should not forget it, even without your help."

Páklin clasped his hands. "Aliósha!* for goodness' sake, what is the matter? How could you take my words so! You are not yourself to-day." Nejdánof made an impatient movement with his head and shoulders. "Basánof's arrest has upset you, but then he did behave so imprudently. . . ."

"He did not conceal his convictions," broke in Mashúrína, gloomily. "It is not for us to blame him."

"No; only he ought also to have thought of others, whom he may now compromise."

"What makes you think thus of him?" growled Ostrodúmof, in his turn. "Basánof is a man of firm character; he will betray no one. And as for prudence . . . do you know what? it is not given to every one to be prudent, Mr. Páklin."

Páklin grew angry, and would have answered, but Nejdánof stopped him. "Gentlemen," he exclaimed, "do me the favour of setting politics aside for a time."

A silence ensued.

"I met Skoropíkhin to-day," at length said Páklin, "the enthusiast and æsthetic critic of all the Russias. What an unbearable being! He is always boiling over

* Diminutive of Alexéi.

and fizzing, exactly like a bottle of bad *kíslie stshi*.* The waiter, as he runs, claps his finger into the mouth instead of a cork, or a fat raisin sticks in the gullet, and the bottle keeps on hissing and whistling, and when all the foam has flown out of it, at the bottom remain a few drops of an abominable liquid, which not only fails to quench thirst, but makes one sick besides. A most dangerous individual for young people!"

The comparison which Páklin had used, though true and apt, did not call a smile to any face. Ostrodúmof alone remarked that there was no reason for lamenting over young people who could be interested by æstheticism, even if Skoropíkhin did lead them astray.

"But, begging your pardon, stop," exclaimed Páklin, warmly; the less sympathy he met the hotter he grew. "Though not political, perhaps, this question is none the less important. To listen to Skoropíkhin, every old production of art is worth nothing, from the mere fact that it is old. But, in that case, art, taste generally, is nothing more than a fashion, and is not worth the trouble of treating seriously. If there is nothing in it which is changeless, eternal, let it go to the deuce! In science, in mathematics for example, you do not count Euler, Laplace, Gauss as doting simpletons? You are ready to acknowledge their dictates, but Raphael and Mozart are fools, and your pride revolts against *their* authority? The laws of art are more difficult to comprehend than those of science, I grant you; but they exist, and he who does not see them is blind, wilfully or not, no matter."

Páklin ceased, and they all sat silent, as if they had filled their mouths with water—just as if they all felt a little ashamed of him. Ostrodúmof alone mumbled,—

* A kind of sparkling drink.

“Still, I have not the smallest pity for those young people whom Skoropíkhin is leading astray.”

“Oh, deuce take you all!” thought Páklin. “I shall be off.”

He had come to Nejdánof in order to communicate to him his ideas on the subject of introducing the *Pole Star** from abroad (the *Bell** had already ceased to exist), but the conversation had taken such a turn that it seemed better not to raise that question. Páklin had already taken up his hat, when suddenly, without any warning noise or knock, there resounded in the passage a wonderfully pleasant, rich, manly, baritone voice, the very sound of which breathed as it were a perfume in its extreme elegance and perfect refinement.

“Is Mr. Nejdánof at home?”

They all glanced at one another in amaze.

“Is Mr. Nejdánof at home?” repeated the voice.

“Yes,” at last answered Nejdánof.

The door opened discreetly and smoothly, and there entered the room a man of under forty, tall, well-made, and majestic, who slowly removed a well-brushed hat from his neatly-clipped head. Dressed in a well-made cloth overcoat, with a superb beaver collar, though it was already near the end of April, he impressed them all—Nejdánof, Páklin, even Mashúrina, nay, even Ostrodúmof—by the elegant self-confidence of his gait and the quiet condescension of his address. All instinctively rose at his appearance.

* Russian revolutionary newspapers printed abroad.

CHAPTER III.

THE distinguished visitor walked up to Nejdánof, and, bowing, said with a gracious smile,—

“I have already had the pleasure of meeting and even conversing with you, Mr. Nejdánof, if you remember, at the theatre the day before yesterday.” (The visitor ceased, as if awaiting an answer. Nejdánof nodded slightly, and blushed.) “Am I not right? And to-day I am brought here by having seen an advertisement which you have inserted in the papers. I should like to have a chat with you, if I do not inconvenience those present” (the visitor bowed to Mashúrina, and waved his hand, which was clad in a grey Swedish glove, in the direction of Páclin and Ostrodúmof), “and if I am not in the way . . .”

“No . . . why should you be?” answered Nejdánof, not without an effort. “My friends will allow us. Won’t you take a seat?”

The visitor gracefully inclined himself, and, taking a chair by the back, drew it towards him. He did not sit down, as all in the room were standing, but only glanced round with his bright though half-closed eyes.

“Good-bye, Alexéi Dmítritch,” suddenly said Mashúrina. “I will come in later.”

“And I also,” added Ostrodúmof.

Avoiding the visitor, and rather as if to annoy him, Mashúrina took Nejdánof’s hand, shook it vigorously, and went out without bowing to any one. Ostrodúmof followed her, stamping on his heels with unnecessary noise, and even snorting once or twice as much as to say, “That’s for you, beaver collar.” The visitor followed them both with a polite but slightly curious look, then glanced at Páklin, as if expecting that he would imitate the example of the two departing guests; but Páklin, whose face had been lit up by a curious, meaning smile ever since the arrival of the stranger, went aside and subsided into a corner. Then the visitor settled down on his chair. Nejdánof did the same.

“My name is Sipiágin; perhaps you have heard it,” began the visitor, with an air of modest pride.

But first we ought to relate how Nejdánof met him at the theatre.

On the occasion of Sadóvski’s* arrival from Moscow, Ostróvski’s piece, ‘Do not Sit in Other People’s Sledges,’ was given. The part of Rusakóf was, as is well known, a favourite one with the famous actor. In the morning Nejdánof went to the ticket-office, where there was a considerable crowd. He had the intention of taking a pit-ticket, but just as he was approaching the window of the office an officer, who was next to him in the file, stretched out two rouble-notes over Nejdánof’s head, and called to the cashier,—

“This gentleman will probably want change, while I shall not; so please be quick and give me a ticket for the stalls: I am in a hurry!”

“Excuse me, sir,” said Nejdánof, in a sharp voice, “I am also going to take a stall,” and then and there

* A celebrated Russian actor.

threw two roubles, his whole available capital, on to the counter.

The cashier gave him his ticket, and thus Nejdánof found himself that evening in the aristocratic division of the Alexandrine Theatre.

He was shabbily clad, he had no gloves, his boots were dirty; he felt confused, and was vexed with himself for feeling so. Next him to the right sat a general bespangled with stars; on his left the same elegant gentleman, the Privy Councillor* Sipiágin, whose appearance two days later was to cause Mashúrina and Ostrodúmof such agitation.

The general now and again glanced at Nejdánof as at something incongruous, unexpected, and even offensive; Sipiágin, on the contrary, cast glances at him which, if sidelong, were at any rate not hostile. All the people round Nejdánof seemed, in the first place, to be personages rather than mere persons; secondly, they all knew each other intimately, and exchanged short sentences, words, and even simple exclamations and salutations, occasionally even across Nejdánof's head, while he sat motionless and uncomfortable in his broad, soft armchair, feeling as if he were a pariah.

He felt bitter, awkward, and uneasy at heart, and little did he enjoy Ostróvski's comedy or Sadóvski's acting. When suddenly, oh, wonder! between two of the acts, his left-hand neighbour—not the star-spangled general, but the other, who bore no mark of distinction on his breast, addressed him politely and softly, with a certain condescending interest. He spoke of Ostróvski's piece, wishing to know what Nejdánof, as "one of the representatives of our youthful generation," thought of it.

Nejdánof, astonished and even frightened, at first

* The second rank of the Russian bureaucracy.

answered abruptly and in monosyllables . . . his heart even beat faster ; but then he became annoyed with himself. Why was he so upset ? Was he not a man like any one else ? And he began to express his opinion without restraint or concealment, and at last so loudly and excitedly that he evidently disturbed the mind of his star-spangled neighbour.

Nejdánof was a warm admirer of Ostróvski ; but, with all his respect for the talent shown in the comedy, 'Do not Sit in Other People's Sledges,' he could not approve the manifest wish to disparage civilization in the caricatured part of Vikhoréf. His polite neighbour listened to him with great attention—nay, even with sympathy—and in the next *entr'acte* again spoke to him, this time not about Ostróvski's comedy, but about various subjects connected with every-day life, science, and even politics. He was evidently interested by his young and eloquent neighbour. Nejdánof, as before, not only threw off all restraint, but even put the steam on a little, as people say. "As you will be inquisitive then, that's for you!" he seemed to say.

He now aroused not merely discomfort in his neighbour, the general, but wrath and suspicion. At the end of the piece, Sipiágin took a gracious leave of Nejdánof, but did not express a wish to know his name nor did he name himself. As he was waiting for his carriage on the staircase, he met an intimate friend, a certain aide-de-camp, Prince G——.

"I was looking at you from my box," said the prince, smiling through his perfumed moustaches. "Do you know to whom you were talking?"

"No, I do not ; do you?"

"The fellow was no fool, was he?"

"By no means ; who is he?"

The prince bent towards Sipiágin and whispered in French, "My brother. Yes ; he is my brother. A

natural son of my father. His name is Nejdánof. I will tell you about it some day. My father did not expect him in the least, so he called him Nejdánof.* However, he has made a provision for him—*il lui a fait un sort* We give him an annuity. He has brains, too; and, thanks to my father, he received a good education. Only he has quite gone wrong, become a kind of Republican. We don't receive him *il est impossible*. But, good-bye; they are calling my carriage."

The prince disappeared, and the next day Sipiágin read in the *Police Gazette* the advertisement which Nejdánof had inserted, and thereon went to his rooms.

"My name is Sipiágin," he said to Nejdánof, as he sat before him on a cane chair, and scanned him with a piercing glance. "I have learnt from the papers that you are desirous of taking a tutorship, and I have come to you with the following proposition. I am married, and have one son, a boy nine years old, and can say frankly that he has good abilities. We spend the greater part of the summer and autumn in the country, in the government of S., five versts† from the chief town. So will you come to us for the vacation, and teach my son Russian and history, the subjects you mention in your advertisement? I venture to think that you will be satisfied with me, my family, and the situation of my house. A beautiful garden, a river, good air, a roomy house. Do you agree? In that case I have only to ask your terms, though I do not suppose," added Sipiágin, with a slight smile, "that any difficulties can arise between us on that score."

The whole time that Sipiágin was speaking, Nej-

* Nejdánof means "unexpected."

† A verstá or verst (pronounced *viorst*) is two-thirds of a mile

dánof looked at him steadily. He looked at the small head slightly thrown back, the narrow forehead, low, though clever, the thin Roman nose, the pleasant eyes, the well-formed lips, from which flowed the courteous speech, the long whiskers, cut after the English fashion—at all this he looked and wondered.

“What does it all mean?” he thought. “Why is this man literally making up to me? This aristocrat and I, how did we meet? What has brought him here?”

He became so wrapped in his thoughts that he did not open his lips, even when Sipiágin, having finished his speech, ceased, awaiting an answer. Sipiágin cast a glance into the corner where sat Páklin, devouring him with his eyes, at least as much as Nejdánof. Was it not the presence of this third person which was preventing Nejdánof from speaking out? Sipiágin raised his eyebrows, as if resigning himself to the strangeness of the scene in which, of his own free will, he had become involved; and, raising his voice as well as his eyebrows, repeated his question.

Nejdánof started. “Of course,” he said, rather hurriedly, “I agree . . . willingly . . . Though I must admit . . . that I cannot help feeling some astonishment, as I have no recommendations . . . and the opinions which I uttered the day before yesterday at the theatre ought rather to deter you . . .”

“In that you are quite mistaken, Alexéi . . . Alexéi Dmítritch? I think,” said Sipiágin, smiling. “I may boldly say that I am known as a man of liberal, progressive convictions, and, on the contrary, allowance being made for all that is peculiar to youth, which is given, with your leave, to a certain exaggeration, those opinions of yours are not in the least opposed to mine, and even please me by their youthful fervour.”

Sipiágin spoke without the smallest hesitation; his

well-rounded, swimming phrases rolled on like honey on butter.

"My wife shares my line of thought," he continued; "her opinions, perhaps, are even closer to yours than to mine, which is intelligible; she is younger. When I read your name (which, by the way, contrary to the usual custom, you published together with your address) in the papers the day after we met—for I had learnt your name at the theatre—it impressed me. I saw in the coincidence—excuse my superstitious expression—as it were, the finger of Fate. You mentioned recommendations: to my mind none are necessary. Your appearance, your person, arouse my sympathy—that is enough. I am accustomed to trust my glance; and so, I may hope that you agree?"

"I agree, of course," answered Nejdánof, "and will endeavour to be worthy of your confidence. Only allow me to warn you of one thing, I am ready to be a teacher to your son, but not a tutor. I am not fit for it; and I do not want to have my hands tied, to lose my freedom."

Sipiágin waved his hand lightly through the air, as if driving away a fly.

"Be at ease, my dear sir, you are not of the stuff of which tutors are made, nor do I need a tutor. I want a teacher, and have found one. Now, as to the terms—the money question—the 'filthy lucre'?"

Nejdánof seemed at a loss what to say.

"Listen!" said Sipiágin, leaning his whole body forward, and touching Nejdánof's knee lightly with the ends of his fingers; "between civilized people such questions are settled in two words. I offer you a hundred roubles a month; of course I pay the expenses of the journey there and back. Do you agree?"

Nejdánof again blushed.

"It is far more than I meant to have asked, because I"

"Enough," broke in Sipiágin. "I look on the matter as settled, and on you as one of the household." He rose from his chair, and suddenly became quite gay and lively, as if he had received a gift. In all his movements there appeared a kind of pleasant and even jocular familiarity. "We shall be leaving soon," he said, in a frank voice. "I like welcoming the spring in the country, although, from the nature of my occupations, I am a prosaic man, and bound fast to town. Therefore, allow me to count this as your first month, commencing from to-day. My wife and son are already at Moscow; she has gone on in front, and we shall find them in the country—in the bosom of nature! You and I will go together as bachelors. He! he!" Sipiágin laughed shortly and affectedly through his nose. "And now . . ."

He took from the pocket of his overcoat a black and silver pocket-book, and drew out a card.

"Here is my present address. Come and see me—to-morrow, if you like—about twelve o'clock; we will have another chat. I will explain to you some of my ideas on education; and we will decide when to leave." Sipiágin took Nejdánof's hand. "And, another thing," he added, dropping his voice, and putting his head on one side, "if you are in want of an earnest, do not hesitate. Take a month in advance, if you will."

Nejdánof simply did not know what to answer, and still stood looking doubtfully into that clear, agreeable face, which was so far removed from him, and yet was so close, and smiled so graciously.

"Don't want it, eh?" whispered Sipiágin.

"If you will allow me, I will tell you to-morrow," said Nejdánof, at length.

"As you wish! So good-bye, till to-morrow."

Sipiágin let go Nejdánof's hand, and was going out . . .

“ Let me ask you ! ” suddenly said Nejdánof. “ You said just this moment that you learnt my name at the theatre. Who told it you ? ”

“ Who ? Why a very good friend of yours, and I think a relation, Prince G——.”

“ The aide-de-camp ? ”

“ Yes.”

Nejdánof blushed redder than before, and opened his mouth, but said nothing.

Sipiágin again shook his hand, this time in silence, and bowing first to him and then to Páclin, put on his hat at the door and went out, with a self-satisfied smile on his face. On it was visible the knowledge of the deep impression which his visit could not fail to produce.

CHAPTER IV.

SIPIAGIN had hardly had time to step across the threshold before Páklin sprang from his chair, and rushing at Nejdánof began to congratulate him.

"What a sturgeon you have caught!" he said again and again, laughing and dancing about. "Do you know who it is? It is the famous Sipiágin, a gentleman of the bedchamber—a kind of pillar of society, a future minister!"

"I never heard of him," said Nejdánof, sullenly.

Páklin waved his hand despairingly.

"That is just our misfortune, Alexéi Dmítritch, that we know no one. We want to act, to turn the whole world upside down, and we live away from that same world, know only a few friends, move in one place, in a narrow circle . . ."

"Excuse me," said Nejdánof, "that is not true. We only object to knowing our enemies; but with people of our own standing, with the nation, we are in constant communication."

"Stop, stop, stop," interrupted Páklin in his turn. "First, as to our enemies: let me recall to you Goethe's lines,—

"'Wer den Dichter will versteh'n
Muss im Dichter's Lande geh'n.'

But I say,—

"'Wer die *Feinde* will versteh'n
Muss im Feindes Lande geh'n.'

To avoid one's enemies, not to know their customs and life, is ridiculous. Yes, ri . . di . . cu . . lous! If I want to shoot a wolf in the forest . . . I must know all his ways. Secondly, you said just now, 'to be intimate with the people.' . . . Why, my good friend, in 1862 the Poles went out 'do liasu,' into the forest, and we are now going out into the same forest, alone among the people, which to us is as dark and impenetrable as any forest you will!"

"Then what ought we to do, according to you?"

"The Hindoos throw themselves under the wheels of Jaggernaut," continued Páklin, gloomily. "It crushes them, and they die . . . in bliss. We also have our Jaggernaut; as for crushing, it crushes us sure enough, but we don't get the bliss."

"Then what ought we to do, according to you?" repeated Nejdánof, almost with a shout. "Write novels 'with a purpose,' or what?"

Páklin opened his arms, and put his head on one side. "The novels you might write, in any case, as you have a literary bent. . . . Now, don't be angry, I won't do it again. I know you do not like hints at that, and I agree with you. To write those things with a purpose, and with the last new terms of expression, too, 'Oh, I love you, she *leapt*,' 'It's all the same to me, he *scratched* his head' . . . is by no means amusing. That is why I repeat to you, be intimate with all classes, beginning with the highest. Don't rely entirely on Ostrodúmofs alone. They are worthy fellows, good enough, but stupid, stupid. You look at our friend. The very soles of his shoes are not like those clever people wear. Why did he go out just this minute? He did not wish to stay in the same room, to breathe the same air, as the aristocrat."

"I beg you will not speak thus of Ostrodúmof in my presence," interrupted Nejdánof, impetuously. "He wears thick boots because they are cheaper."

"I did not mean that," began Páklin.

"If he does not care to remain in the same room as an aristocrat," continued Nejdánof, in a shriller voice, "why, I praise him for it; and, above all, he knows how to sacrifice himself, and, if needful, he will face death, which neither you nor I will ever do."

Páklin made a pitiful face, and pointed at his own thin little bandy legs. "How should I fight, friend Alexéi Dmítritch? But enough of that subject. . . . I repeat I am heartily glad of your intimacy with Mr. Sipiágin, and even foresee great advantage from that intimacy for our cause. You will find yourself in a higher circle; you will see those lionesses, those women with velvet bodies on steel springs, as it is said in 'Letters from Spain.' Study them, brother—study them. If you were an epicurean, I should even fear for you, really. But, of course, it is not with that intention that you are taking a situation?"

"I am taking a situation," exclaimed Nejdánof, "to give my teeth something to do . . . and to get away from you all for a time," he added inwardly.

"Why, of course, of course; and for that reason I tell you 'study.' But what a perfume that gentleman has left behind him!" Páklin sniffed the air. "This is the very 'amber' of which the mayoress in the 'Revisór'* dreamt."

"He has asked Prince G—— about me," muttered Nejdánof, who was again leaning against the window; "so he now probably knows all my story."

"Not 'probably,' but 'certainly.' Why, I will lay a bet that that was exactly what put the idea of taking you as a tutor into his head. Whatever you may say, you know that you are an aristocrat—by blood. Well, and in that case one of his caste. But I have stayed too long with you; I must be

* A well-known comedy by Gógol.

off to my office, to the *exploiteurs*.* Good-bye, brother."

Páklin went towards the door, but stopped and turned round. "Listen, Aliósha," he said in a caressing voice; "you refused me a moment ago—you will have money now, I know—but, all the same, allow me to subscribe, if it is only a little, to the common cause. I can give no other help, so let me help with my purse! Look, I have put a ten-rouble note on the table. Is it accepted?"

Nejdánof did not answer, and did not even move.

"Silence is consent. Thanks!" exclaimed Páklin gaily, and disappeared.

Nejdánof remained alone. He continued to look through the window at the narrow dismal yard where no rays even of the summer sun ever penetrated, and his face, too, was dismal.

Nejdánof's parents, as we already know, were a certain Prince G——, a wealthy general aide-de-camp, and the governess of the latter's daughters, a pretty school-girl, who died on the day of his birth. Nejdánof received his early education in a school kept by a Swiss, an able and severe pedagogue. He afterwards entered the university. His own wish was to take his degree in law; but his father, the general, who hated all Nihilists, made him choose "æsthetics," as Nejdánof used to say with a bitter smile, *i.e.* the school of history and philology.† Nejdánof's father saw him but three or four times a year; but he took an interest in his fate, and at his death left him, "in remembrance of Nástenka" (his mother), a sum of 6,000 roubles, the interest of which under the name of a pension was paid him by his brothers, the Princes

* A name frequently applied to the middle-class in Russian social writings.

† Nihilistic tendencies are much more common among students in law than among those who study classics.

G——. Páklin was not wrong when he called him an aristocrat. Everything in him betrayed breeding—his small ears, hands, and feet, his somewhat small but finely cut features, the delicacy of his skin, the fineness of his hair, his very voice, which had a slight but pleasant lisp. He was terribly nervous, terribly self-conscious, impressionable, and even capricious. The false position in which he had been placed from his very childhood had made him susceptible and touchy ; but the natural nobility of his character prevented him from becoming suspicious and distrustful. This same false position also explained the contradictions which were apparent in Nejdánof's nature. Neat to a fault, particular to fastidiousness, he endeavoured to be cynical and coarse in his language. An idealist by nature, passionate and chaste, bold and timid at one and the same time, he was as ashamed of his timidity and of his modesty as if they had been disgraceful faults ; and he held it a duty to ridicule all ideals. His heart was tender, yet he avoided people ; he was easily angered, yet he never bore malice. He was enraged with his father for having started him in "æsthetics." Openly in the sight of people he occupied himself solely with political and social questions. He propounded the most advanced opinions (and they at least in him were no mere words) ; but in secret he enjoyed art, poetry, beauty in all its forms. He even wrote verses. . . . He carefully hid the book in which he wrote them down ; and of all his Petersburg friends only Páklin—and he by his peculiarly sharp scent—suspected its existence. Nothing made Nejdánof so angry, or offended him so much, as the smallest hint at his poetic tendencies, at that which he deemed an unpardonable weakness. Thanks to the Swiss who had educated him, he knew a good many facts, and was not afraid of work. He even worked with pleasure—a little feverishly and

irregularly, it is true. His companions liked him. They were attracted by his natural goodness, truth, and purity. But Nejdánof was not born under a lucky star; his life was not an easy one. He himself felt this deeply, and knew that he was isolated in spite of the attachment of his friends.

He continued to stand before the window, and he thought, thought sadly and heavily of the journey he had before him—of this sudden, unexpected turn in his fortunes. He did not regret Petersburg. He left in it nothing specially dear to him; and he knew that he should return in the autumn. And yet he was deep in thought, and an involuntary sadness crept over him.

“What a tutor I shall make!” came into his head. “What a pedagogue!” He was ready to blame himself for having accepted the position. Yet such blame would not have been deserved. Nejdánof’s knowledge was sufficient, and, despite his uneven temper, children went to him without compulsion; and he also easily became attached to them. The sadness which had seized Nejdánof was that feeling which accompanies every change of abode—a feeling which all melancholy, all thoughtful people have. To those of an alert, sanguine temperament it is unknown. They are rather ready to rejoice when the daily groove of their life is broken into, when their usual habits are changed. Nejdánof became so wrapped in his thoughts that at last, almost unconsciously, they began to take the form of words. The ideas which were wandering within him were shaping themselves into rhythm. . . .

“Oh, the devil!” he exclaimed aloud. “I believe I was beginning to versify!” He roused himself and left the window; seeing the ten-rouble note which Páklin had left lying on the table, he put it into his pocket, and began walking to and fro.

“I shall have to take an earnest,” he thought, “as that

gentleman proposes it. A hundred roubles from him, and another hundred from my brothers, the Princes. Fifty for my debts, fifty or seventy for the journey, and the rest to Ostrodúmof. And this of Páklin's he can have too; and I must get something from Merkúlof."

While he was making these calculations, the rhythmical feeling again stirred within him. He stopped thoughtfully, and, looking to one side, remained immovable. Then his hands, as if of their own accord, sought and opened the drawer of the table, and brought out from its inmost depths a manuscript book. . . .

He sank on to a chair, without changing the direction of his look, took a pen, and humming to himself half audibly, while now and then tossing back his hair, he began, with many blots and corrections, to set down one line after another.

The door in the passage opened slightly, and Mashúrina's head appeared. Nejdánof did not notice her, and continued his work. She looked at him long and steadily, and shaking her head from right to left, drew back. But Nejdánof suddenly started up, looked round, and saying with vexation, "Oh, it is you!" threw the book into the table-drawer.

Then Mashúrina entered with her firm step.

"Ostrodúmof has sent me to you," she said, slowly, "to know when he can have the money. If you can get it to-day, we will leave this evening."

"To-day I cannot," answered Nejdánof, knitting his brows. "Come to-morrow."

"At what time?"

"At two."

"Good."

Mashúrina remained silent a moment, then gave Nejdánof her hand.

"I think I interrupted you. Excuse me. And then . . . I am going away. Who knows if we shall meet again? I wished to say good-bye to you."

Nejdánof shook her cold, red fingers.

“ You saw that gentleman who was with me ? ” he began. “ We have agreed that I am to take a situation in his house. His property is in the government of S., near the town itself.”

A smile of pleasure passed across Mashúrina’s face.

“ Near S. ! Then perhaps we shall meet again. Perhaps they will send us there.”

Mashúrina sighed, “ Ah, Alexéi Dmítritch”

“ What ? ” said Nejdánof.

Mashúrina put on a pre-occupied look.

“ Nothing. Good-bye. Nothing ! ”

She once more pressed Nejdánof’s hand, and went out.

“ And in all Petersburg there is no one so attached to me as that queer girl ! ” thought Nejdánof. “ But what did she want to disturb me for ? However, it is just as well ! ”

The next morning Nejdánof went to Sipiágin’s town house ; he found him in a superb study, furnished in the most severe style, quite befitting the position of the liberal statesman and gentleman, sitting before an enormous desk, on which in perfect order lay papers which were of no use to any one or for anything side by side with gigantic ivory paper-cutters which had never cut a sheet. There for a whole hour Nejdánof listened to the host as he expounded his liberal ideas, and gave himself up to the charm of the wise, benevolent, condescending flow of words, then received his hundred roubles earnest money. Ten days later that same Nejdánof, reclining on a velvet sofa in a reserved compartment of a first-class carriage, side by side with the same wise and liberal statesman and gentleman, was being hurried towards Moscow over the uneven rails of the Nicolas line.

CHAPTER V.

IN the drawing-room of a large stone house with a classical façade and columns, built about the year twenty of the present century by Sipiágin's father, a well-known agriculturist and "dentiste,"* sat his wife, Valentína Mikháilovna, a remarkably handsome woman, awaiting every moment the arrival of her husband, announced by telegram. The furniture of the drawing-room bore signs of the latest and most artistic taste. Everything in it was pretty and cheerful—everything, from the gay chintz curtains and coverings down to the various china, bronze, and crystal trifles which were scattered over tables and *étagères*. Everything stood out softly and harmoniously, and blended with the cheerful beams of the May-day sun, which poured freely through the lofty windows standing wide open. The air in the room, heavy with the scent of the lily of the valley (large bouquets of which lovely spring flower gleamed brightly here and there), drifted gently now and again, stirred by a light breath of wind which wandered in from over the richly blossoming garden.

It was a beautiful picture, and the hostess herself, Valentína Mikháilovna Sipiágina, completed the picture by giving it meaning and life. She was

* Russian slang for a bully.

out thirty, tall, with dark chestnut hair, a brown but an even-tinted face, whose outline reminded one of theistine Madonna, with wonderful deep velvety eyes. Her lips were a little thick and pale, her shoulders rather high, her hands rather big. But, in spite of all this, every one who could have seen her moving easily and gracefully through the drawing-room, now bending her slim, slightly made figure, with a smile, over the flowers, to enjoy their scent, now moving some Chinese vase, now quickly arranging her shining curls before the glass, with her marvellous eyes half closed,—every one, we repeat, would certainly have exclaimed, either to himself or aloud, that he had never met a more captivating creature!

A pretty, curly-headed boy of nine, in a Scotch costume, with bare legs, with his hair elaborately curled and pomaded, ran headlong into the drawing-room, and stopped suddenly at the sight of Valentína Mikháilovna.

"What is it, Kólia?"* she asked. Her voice was soft and velvety as her eyes.

"Why, mamma," the boy began, in a confused manner, "auntie sent me told me to bring her me lilies of the valley for her room she isn't any"

Valentína Mikháilovna took her son by the chin and kissed his curly head.

"Tell auntie that she may send to the gardener for lilies of the valley: these are mine. I do not want them to be touched. Tell her that I do not like my arrangements upset. Shall you be able to repeat my words?"

"Yes" whispered the boy.

"Well, tell me what you will say."

"I will say that you won't let me."

* Diminutive of Nikolái.

Valentína Mikháilovna laughed. Her laugh too was soft.

"I see that I can't trust you with messages yet. Well, it's all the same; say whatever comes into your head."

The boy quickly kissed his mother's hand, which was loaded with rings, and rushed out.

Valentína Mikháilovna followed him with her eyes, gave a sigh, and sauntered towards a gilt wire cage, up the side of which a little green parrot was climbing, holding on carefully with beak and claws, and tickled him with the end of her finger; then she sank on to a low divan, and, taking the last number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* off a little round carved table, began to turn over the leaves.

A respectful cough made her look up. On the threshold stood a highly correct servant in livery and a white necktie.

"What is it, Agathón?" she asked, in the same soft voice.

"Semeón Petróvitch Kalloméitsef has arrived, ma'am. Will you receive him?"

"Show him in, of course, show him in; and let Mariánná Vikéntievna be asked to come down to the drawing-room."

Valentína Mikháilovna threw the *Revue* on to the table, and, leaning back on the divan, raised her eyes and looked thoughtful, which was extremely becoming.

Semeón Petróvitch Kalloméitsef was a young man of thirty-two. Merely by the way in which he entered the room, freely, carelessly, and languidly; by the way he suddenly beamed out, as he bowed rather to one side and straightened himself springily; by the manner he spoke, slightly through his nose and rather affectedly; by the respectful way in which he kissed Valentína Mikháilovna's hand,—by all these signs one could guess that the new arrival was no

inhabitant of the country, no casual neighbour, even of the richest, but a real Petersburger of the highest flight. Besides which, he was dressed in the last English fashion; the embroidered corner of a new white cambric handkerchief peeped in a tiny triangle out of the flat breast-pocket of a morning jacket; a single eye-glass dangled at the end of a rather broad black ribbon. The dull grey of his Swedish gloves went well with the pale grey of his checked trousers. Mr. Kalloméitsef had his hair clipped close, his chin shaved smooth. His somewhat feminine face, with its small eyes set near each other, its thin turned-up nose and fat red lips, wore the easy expression of a highly educated nobleman. Though full of politeness, it easily became wicked, even rude; it was sufficient for any one to ruffle Semeón Petróvitch in any way, to ruffle his conservative, patriotic, and religious feelings, and then, oh, then, he became merciless; all his elegance vanished instantly, his gentle eyes shone with an unpleasant light, his charming mouth uttered words by no means charming, and he invoked, in shrill tones he invoked, the aid of government.

Semeón Petróvitch's family was descended from simple market-gardeners. His great-grandfather was called Koloméntsof,* after the place of his birth; but his grandfather already styled himself Koloméitsef, his father wrote it Kolloméitsef, Semeón Petróvitch changed the "o," and deemed himself an aristocrat of the bluest blood. On this subject he allowed no jests. He even hinted that his family sprang from certain Barons von Gallenmeier, one of whom was an Austrian field-marshal in the Thirty Years' War. Semeón Petróvitch was a court official, and held the rank of Kammerjunker; his patriotism prevented him from entering the diplomatic service, where, it might have been thought, everything would have

* Kolómna is a town not far from Moscow.

been in his favour : his education, his experience of the world, his success among women, his very appearance. . . . mais quitter la Russie ?—jamais ! Kalloméitsef had a fair property and some influence ; he passed for a trustworthy and loyal man—"un peu trop . . . féodal dans ses opinions," as the famous Prince B., one of the lights of the Petersburg official world, expressed it. He had come into the government of S. on a two months' leave, "to occupy himself with his estate," *i.e.*, "to frighten one, to squeeze another." Impossible, you know, to do otherwise !

"I thought I should have found Borís Andréitch already here," he began, standing first on one leg, then on the other, and looking suddenly to one side, in imitation of a certain very great personage.

Valentína Mikháilovna closed her eyes softly. "Otherwise you would not have come ?"

Kalloméitsef almost fell backwards, so unjust and impossible did the question appear to him.

"Valentína Mikháilovna !" he exclaimed, "is it possible that you can imagine . . . ?"

"Well, well, sit down. Borís Andréitch will be here directly. I have sent a carriage to the station for him. Wait a little, you will see him. What is the time ?"

"Half past two," answered Kalloméitsef, taking out of his pocket a large enamelled gold watch. He showed it to Sipiágina. "Have you seen my watch ? Mikháil gave it me—the Prince of Servia, you know, the Obrénovitch. Look, this is his motto. He is a great friend of mine ; we have hunted together. A capital fellow ! And an iron hand, as a ruler should have. Oh, he will stand no nonsense ! No-o-ó !"

Kalloméitsef sat down in an armchair, crossed his legs, and began slowly to pull off his left glove. "Now if we had such a Mikháil here, in our government of S. !"

“Why, are you dissatisfied with anything?”

Kalloméitsef made a wry face. “Why, that Zemstvo!* that Zemstvo! what is the use of it? Only weakens the administration, and excites . . . unnecessary ideas” . . . (Kalloméitsef waved his left hand, which was now free from the pressure of the glove) “and hopes which cannot be realized” (Kalloméitsef breathed on his hand). “I told them all this in Petersburg. . . . Mais, bah! the wind is not blowing in that quarter. Even your husband, just think! However, he is a well-known radical.”

Sipiágina sat up on her ottoman.

“What, are you also, Mr. Kalloméitsef, among the opposition?”

“I in the opposition? Never! Not on any account. Mais j’ai mon franc parler. I sometimes criticize, but always submit.”

“Ah, I reverse that. I never criticize, and never submit.”

“Ah, mais c’est un mot. I will tell it, with your permission, to my friend Ladislas—vous savez—who is about to publish a novel of high life, and has already read me a few chapters. It will be delightful. Nous aurons enfin le grand monde russe peint par lui-même.”

“Where will it appear?”

“In the *Russian Messenger*, of course. It is our *Revue des Deux Mondes*. I see, you read that.”

“Yes; but do you know it is becoming very dull.”

“Possibly, possibly. And the *Russian Messenger*, too, of late has perhaps, to speak the language of the day, gone down a peg.”

Kalloméitsef laughed hugely. He seemed to think his expression extremely funny.

“Mais c’est un journal qui se respecte,” he continued; “and that is the chief thing. I may tell you

* Elective provincial assembly, instituted in 1866.

of
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I take little interest in Russian literature. All sorts of low people figure in it now. They have reached a point at last when the heroine of a novel is a cook—a mere cook, parole d'honneur. But Ladislas's novel I must certainly read. Il y aura le petit mot pour rire. And the tendency, the tendency! The Nihilists will be held up to scorn. That is guaranteed by the opinions of Ladislas—qui est très correct."

"More than his past is," remarked Sipiágina.

"Ah, jetons un voile sur les erreurs de sa jeunesse," exclaimed Kalloméitsef, as he drew off his right glove.

Mrs. Sipiágina again slightly closed her eyes. She used to play the coquette a little with those wonderful eyes.

"Semeón Petróvitch," she said, "let me ask you why it is that in speaking Russian you use so many French words? It seems to me—excuse me—that the fashion has rather gone out."

"Why? why? Everybody cannot wield our native tongue as well as you, for instance. As for me, I recognize the Russian language, the language of ukazes and regulations. I value its purity. I bow before Káramzin.* But the Russian language for every-day use, does it exist? Now, for instance, how would you translate my exclamation, de tout à l'heure; 'c'est un mot'?—It is a—word? Impossible."

"I should have said, 'It is a happy word.'"

Kalloméitsef laughed.

"'A happy word,' Valentína Mikháilovna! Do you not feel that it smells of the seminary . . . ? All the salt is gone . . ."

"Well, you will not convince me. But where is Mariánna?"

* A well-known historian, who wrote in rather pompous, formal Russian.

She rang a bell. A page appeared.

"I ordered that Mariánna Vikéntievna should be asked to come into the drawing-room. Was she not told?"

The page had not time to answer when behind him on the threshold appeared a young girl, with her hair cropped, dressed in a dark blouse, Mariánna Vikéntievna Sinétskaia, a niece of Sipiágin on her mother's side.

CHAPTER VI.

“EXCUSE me, Valentína Mikháilovna,” she said, approaching Sipiágina. “I was occupied and time slipped away.”

Then she bowed to Kalloméitsef, and, going aside, sat down on a little stool close to the parrot, which on seeing her fluttered its wings and stretched its neck towards her.

“Why have you gone so far off, Mariánna?” remarked Sipiágina, whose eyes had followed her up to the stool. “You want to be near your small friend? Imagine, Semeón Petróvitch,”—she turned to Kalloméitsef—“that parrot is simply in love with our Mariánna . . .”

“I do not wonder at it!”

“And cannot endure me.”

“Now that *is* wonderful! I suppose you tease it?”

“Never; on the contrary I feed it with sugar; only it will take nothing from me. No, it is sympathy and antipathy . . .”

Mariánna and Sipiágina glanced at each other under their eyebrows. There was no love lost between these two women.

Compared to her aunt, Mariánna might almost have been called ugly. Her face was round, her nose large and hooked, her eyes grey, but also large and very bright, her eyebrows and lips thin, the thick

brown hair was cut short, and her look was heavy. But there was something strong and bold, something impetuous and passionate, about her. Her hands and feet were tiny; her small, firm, and lithe figure reminded one of the Florentine statues of the sixteenth century, and her movements were graceful and light.

Sinétskaia's position in the Sipiágin's house was somewhat difficult. Her father, a clever and energetic man of partly Polish blood, worked his way up to the rank of general, but suddenly fell, detected in a gigantic fraud against the Crown; he was tried, condemned, deprived of his rank and nobility, and sent to Siberia. Then he was pardoned and returned, but could not regain his place, and died in the greatest poverty. His wife, Sipiágin's sister, the mother of Mariánna (who was an only child) could not bear the blow which had destroyed all her comfort, and died soon after her husband. Sipiágin gave his niece Mariánna a home. But she had a horror of living as a dependent. She was eager for freedom, with all the might of her untameable soul, and between her and her aunt raged a continual though concealed struggle. Sipiágina considered her a Nihilist and an atheist; on her side Mariánna hated Sipiágina as her inevitable oppressor. Her uncle she avoided, as she did other people. I say avoided, and not feared; her character was a fearless one.

"Antipathy," echoed Kalloméitsef, "yes, it is a strange thing. Every one, for instance, knows that I am a most religious man, Orthodox in the full sense of the word; but the long hair of a priest I cannot behold with equanimity. Something boils within me—simply boils."

Kalloméitsef even showed, by twice raising his clenched fist, how something boiled within his breast.

"You are generally touchy on the subject of hair,* Semeón Petróvitch," remarked Mariánna, "I am sure you cannot see with equanimity hair cut close like mine."

Sipiágina slowly raised her eyebrows, and put her head on one side, as if wondering at the freedom with which the young ladies of the present day take part in conversation; Kalloméitsef smiled condescendingly.

"Of course," he said, "I cannot but regret the fate of fair curls like yours, Mariánna Vikéntievna, which fall under the ruthless blade of the scissors; but I have no antipathy to short hair, and in any case your example might convert me."

"Thank Heaven! Mariánna has not yet taken to spectacles," broke in Sipiágina, "nor parted with collars and cuffs; but she occupies herself with natural science, to my sincere regret, and she also takes an interest in the rights of women. . . . Do you not, Mariánna?"

All this was meant to confuse her, but she was not to be confused.

"Yes, aunt," she answered, "I read all that is written about it and do my best to understand the question."

"This is what comes of being young," said Sipiágina, turning to Kalloméitsef: "now you and I no longer occupy ourselves with such things—eh?"

Kalloméitsef smiled sympathizingly; he had to countenance the charming lady's amusing joke.

"Mariánna Vikéntievna," he began, "is still filled with that idealizing romance of youth, which in time. . . ."

"However, I am making myself out worse than I am," interrupted Sipiágina. "These questions do interest me. I am not quite an old woman yet."

"And I too am interested in all this," hurriedly ex-

* Priests in Russia wear their hair uncut.

claimed Kalloméitsef, "only I should forbid people to talk about it!"

"Forbid people to talk about it?" asked Mariánna.

"Yes! I should tell the public, 'You may take an interest, but no talking,'—sh—" he placed his finger on his lips. "In any case, I should forbid print, unconditionally!"

Sipiágina laughed.

"Why, would you appoint a commission from the ministry to decide that question?"

"A commission, and why not? Do you think we should decide the question worse than all those starveling scribblers who see no further than their own noses and who imagine that they are geniuses of the first water. . .? We would appoint Borís Andréitch president. . ."

Sipiágina laughed more merrily than before. "Take care," she said, "my husband is sometimes a terrible Jacobin."

"Jacko, jacko, jacko," said the parrot.

Valentína Mikháilovna shook her handkerchief at it. "Don't interrupt clever people's talk! Mariánna, play with it."

Mariánna turned to the cage and began to scratch the parrot's neck, which it at once stretched out.

"Yes," continued Sipiágina, "Borís Andréitch sometimes astonishes even me. He has in him something of the . . . tribune."

"C'est parce qu'il est orateur!" broke in Kalloméitsef, warmly, in French. "Your husband has the gift of speaking as few have it, and he is accustomed to shine . . . ses propres paroles le grisent . . . and then there is the wish for popularity, and he is a little put out now, too, is he not? Il boude? Eh?"

Sipiágina looked at Mariánna.

"I have not remarked anything," she said, after short pause.

"Yes," continued Kalloméitsef, in a thoughtful tone, "they rather passed him over at Easter. . . ."

Sipiáгина again indicated Mariánna with her eyes.

Kalloméitsef smiled and blinked, as if to say, "I understand." "Mariánna Vikéntievna!" he suddenly exclaimed, in an unnecessarily loud tone, "do you intend to teach in the school again this year?"

Mariánna turned away from the cage.

"Does that also interest you, Semeón Petróvitch?"

"Of course; it interests me very greatly."

"You would not forbid it, then?"

"I would forbid Nihilists even to think of schools; but under the care of the clergy, and with supervision over the clergy, I would start them myself."

"Really, I do not know what I shall do this year. Last year everything went so badly. And what school can one expect in summer?"

When Mariánna spoke, she grew redder and redder, as if it cost her an effort, as if she had to force herself to continue. She was still very self-conscious.

"You are perhaps not sufficiently prepared?" said Sipiáгина, with an ironical quiver in her voice.

"Perhaps not."

"What?" exclaimed Kalloméitsef. "What do I hear? Good Heavens! To teach peasant-girls the alphabet one needs preparation?"

At that moment Kólia rushed into the drawing-room, with a shout,—

"Mamma, mamma, papa is coming!" and after him, rolling along on her fat little legs, came a white-haired old lady in a cap and a yellow shawl, who also said that Borínka * would be here in a minute.

The old lady was Sipiágin's aunt, Anna Zakhárovna by name. All those who were in the drawing-room sprang from their seats, and rushed into the hall, then down the steps of the main entrance. A long avenue

* Diminutive of Borís.

of clipped firs ran from the main road straight up to the door, and a four-horse carriage was already driving up it. Valentína Mikháilovna, who was standing in front, waved her handkerchief; Kólia screamed shrilly; the coachman pulled up the steaming horses smartly; the footman flew down from the box, and almost jerked the carriage-door off its hinges, handle, lock, and all; then, with a benevolent smile on his lips, in his eyes, over all his face, throwing off his cloak with one active movement of his shoulders, Borís Andréitch stepped to the ground. Valentína Mikháilovna quickly and gracefully threw her arms round his neck and kissed him thrice. Kólia was stamping and pulling his father's coat-tails, but the latter first kissed Anna Zakhárovna, after having removed from his head a very ugly and uncomfortable Scotch travelling-cap, then saluted Mariánna and Kalloméitsef, who had also come out (with Kalloméitsef he shook hands vigorously after the English style, as if he were ringing a bell), and only then turned to his son, whom he took under the arms and raised to his face.

While all this was going on, Nejdánof alighted quietly from the carriage, with a guilty look, and stood by the front wheel, keeping his hat on and looking from under his eyebrows. Valentína Mikháilovna, as she embraced her husband, glanced keenly over his shoulder at the new figure; Sipiágin had warned her to expect the tutor with him.

All the company, continuing to welcome the newly arrived master of the house, moved up the staircase, on either side of which were ranged the upper servants. They did not kiss his hand, that "Asiaticism" had long been abolished, but only bowed respectfully, and Sipiágin answered their bows, rather with his brows and nose than with his head.

Nejdánof, too, walked up the broad steps. When

they reached the hall, Sipiágin, who had been seeking him with his eyes, presented him to his wife, to Anna Zakhárovna and to Mariánná, and said to Kólia,—

“This is your tutor; you will please obey him. Give him your hand.”

Kólia timidly gave Nejdánof his hand, and then looked at him, but apparently not finding anything remarkable or agreeable in him, caught hold of his papa again.

Nejdánof felt as uncomfortable as he had been at the theatre. He had on rather an old and worn-out cloak, and the dust of the road had settled on his hands and face. Valentína Mikháilovna said a few pleasant words, but he did not hear them clearly and did not answer; he only remarked that she looked very brightly and pleasantly at her husband, and leant upon him very lovingly. Kólia's carefully curled and pomaded hair did not please him. When he saw Kalloméitsef, he thought “What a well-licked face!” and to the others he paid no attention whatever.

Sipiágin twice turned his head round gravely, as if inspecting his penates, by which his long whiskers and the rather small prominent back of his head were very clearly shown. Then, in a strong, pleasing voice, though rather hoarse from dust, he called to one of the servants,—

“Iván, show this gentleman to the green room, and take his portmanteau up,” and told Nejdánof that he might now rest, see to his things, and wash himself, and that dinner was at five precisely.

Nejdánof bowed and followed Iván to the green room, which was on the first floor.

Every one then went into the drawing-room, where the welcoming recommenced. There appeared a half-blind old nurse “with her duty.” Sipiágin, out of respect for her age, allowed her to kiss his hand, then, excusing himself to Kalloméitsef, went to his room accompanied by his wife.

CHAPTER VII.

THE room into which the servant showed Nejdánof was large and pleasant, and overlooked the garden. The windows were open, and a gentle wind puffed out the white curtains, which swelled like sails and alternately rose and fell. Across the ceiling patches of golden light moved gently to and fro, and the whole room was full of the fresh, somewhat moist breath of spring. Nejdánof began by sending away the servant, unpacking his portmanteau, washing, and changing. The journey had worn him out. Spending two days alone with a stranger, with whom he had talked much and fruitlessly on many subjects, had irritated his nerves. A bitter feeling, hardly dulness, nor yet anger, had secretly pervaded the very depths of his being. He hated himself for his weakness, but in his heart was still despondent.

He walked to the window and stood looking into the garden. It was a garden of the time of our forefathers, such as flourishes on the black land,* such as you will not find to the north of Moscow. It was situated on the gentle slope of a hill, and consisted of four quite distinct divisions. For two hundred yards in front of the house extended the flower-garden, with straight gravel walks, groups of acacias and lilacs, and round flower-beds; to the left, past the stable, up to

* A strip of very fertile land running across the centre of Russia.

the farm-yard, lay a kitchen-garden, thickly planted with apple, pear, and plum-trees, currant and raspberry bushes. Straight in front of the house rose alleys of limes planted in a square. To the right the view was bounded by a path planted with a double row of silver poplars; the gabled roof of a hot-house peeped over a group of weeping birch-trees. The whole garden was in the first beauty of its delicate green spring foliage; the deep hum of insects was not yet heard as in summer; the young leaves whispered; chaffinches twittered here and there; a couple of doves sat cooing on the same tree, and a cuckoo was heard, changing its place every time; while from over the mill-pond came the distant cawing of a multitude of rooks, like the creaking of many cart-wheels. And over all this young, quiet, solitary life sailed the bright, round-breasted clouds, like great, lazy birds. Nejdánof looked and listened, and drew in the air through his cold, open lips, and his heart grew lighter; the quiet reacted upon him also.

Meanwhile, in the dressing-room below, the talk was about him. Sipiágin told his wife how he had made his acquaintance, what Prince G——. had told him, and the conversation they had carried on during the journey.

“A clever lad,” he repeated, “and well informed. It is true he is a ‘red,’ but then you know I do not mind that: those people are at least ambitious. And Kólia is too young to catch any silly ideas from him.”

Valentína Mikháilovna listened to her husband with a gentle but slightly mischievous smile, as if he were confessing to her a rather strange but amusing folly. She seemed rather pleased that her *seigneur et maître*, such a staid man and important official, was still capable of playing such a trick, like a lad of twenty. Sipiágin stood before the glass in a snow-

white shirt, with light-blue silken braces, and brushed his head with a pair of brushes after the English fashion, while Valentína Mikháilovna, who was sitting with her feet under her on a low Turkish divan, began to give him bits of information about the estate ; the paper-mill—which, alas ! was not going on as satisfactorily as it should ; about the cook, who would have to be changed ; about the church, off which the plaster was peeling ; about Mariánna, Kalloméitsef, &c.

Between this couple there existed a sincere confidence and understanding. They really did live “in love and counsel,” as was said of old, and when Sipiágin, having finished his toilet, gallantly asked his wife for her hand, when she gave him both, and looked at him with tender pride as he kissed them alternately, the feeling expressed in their faces was a good and truthful one, though in her it shone in eyes worthy of Raphael, and in him in the simple “peepers” of a general.*

At five precisely Nejdánof went downstairs to dinner, which was announced not by a bell, but by the clash of a Chinese gong. The whole company was already assembled in the dining-room. Sipiágin again welcomed him from over his lofty cravat, and showed him his place at table between Anna Zakhárovna and Kólia.

Anna Zakhárovna was an old maid, sister of Sipiágin’s father. She smelt of camphor, like clothes that have long been put aside, and had a restless and unhappy look. Her part in the household was that of a kind of nurse to Kólia, and her wrinkled face expressed displeasure when Nejdánof took his place between her and her pupil.

Kólia kept on looking sideways at his new neigh-

* Civilians in Russia often assume the military rank corresponding to their own in the official service.

bour. The sharp boy soon understood that his tutor was uncomfortable and confused. Nejdánof did not raise his eyes, and ate hardly anything. Kólia was pleased at this. Up to this time he had feared lest the tutor should prove stern and severe. Valentína Mikháilovna also glanced from time to time at Nejdánof.

"He looks like a student," she thought, "and he has seen nothing of the world; but his face is interesting, and the colour of his hair is original, like that of the apostle whom the early Italian masters always painted with red hair. His hands, too, are clean."

In fact, every one at the table looked at Nejdánof, but seemed to pity him, and to wish to leave him to himself at first; and he felt this, and was content that it should be so, and yet, for some reason, was vexed. Kalloméitsef and Sipiágin carried on the conversation. It ran on the provincial assembly, on the governor, on the taxes for roads, on certificates of exemption, on common friends in Moscow and Petersburg, on Mr. Kátkof's college, which was then coming into power, on the difficulty of finding labourers, on fines, and pounding of cattle; also on Bismarck, the war of 1866, and on Napoleon III., whom Kalloméitsef called a fine fellow.

The young Kammerjunker expressed the most retrograde opinions. He went so far at last as to repeat—as a joke, however—a toast which some friend of his had proposed at a birthday banquet. "I drink to the only principles I recognize," had exclaimed this excited landowner, "the knout and Roederer!"

Valentína Mikháilovna frowned, and remarked that the quotation was "*de très-mauvais goût*."

Sipiágin, on his side, expressed the most liberal ideas. He refuted Kalloméitsef politely, but with a shade of contempt, and even laughed at him.

“Your fears about emancipation, my dear Semeón Petróvitch,” he said, among other things, “remind me of the report which our most worthy and excellent Alexéi Ivánitch Tverítinof sent in in 1860, and which he read everywhere in Petersburg drawing-rooms. There was one particularly superb phrase in it, how our peasant, when freed, would certainly march, torch in hand, over the face of the land. You should have seen how our dear friend Alexéi Ivánovitch, puffing out his cheeks and rolling his eyes, uttered, with his baby mouth, ‘Torch, t . . . torch, t . . . torch in hand.’ Well, the emancipation is completed. Where is your peasant with his torch?”

“Tverítinof,” answered Kalloméitsef, gloomily, “was only mistaken in one thing. It is not the peasants who will take up torches, but others.”

At these words Nejdánof, who up to this moment had hardly noticed Mariánna—she was sitting across the table, but not exactly opposite—suddenly interchanged glances with her, and felt directly that he and that sullen-looking girl had the same opinions and the same object. She had made no impression on him when Sipiágin had introduced them; how was it then that he had chosen her to exchange glances with now? He put a question to himself. Was it not disgraceful, was it not shameful, to sit by and hear such opinions without protest, giving by his silence reason to think that he shared them? Nejdánof again glanced at her, and it seemed to him that he read the answer to his question in her eyes,—“Wait; this is not the time. It is not worth while. By-and-by you will always have a chance.”

He was pleased to think that she understood him, and again listened to the conversation. Valentína Mikháilovna had taken her husband’s place, and was expressing herself more freely, more radically even than he. She could not understand, simply could

not un der stand, how a man, young and well educated, could hold such old-fashioned ideas. "However," she added, "I am sure you only talk like that for the sake of saying something smart. As for you, Alexéi Dmítritch," turning to Nejdánof with a gracious smile (he felt astonished at her knowing his name and patronymic), "I am sure you do not share Semeón Petróvitch's fears. Borís has repeated to me the conversation you had on the journey."

Nejdánof blushed, bent over his plate, and murmured something inaudible; not that he was shy, but he was unaccustomed to conversing with such brilliant personages. Sipiágina continued to smile at him; her husband gave her an encouraging nod. As for Kalloméitsef, he stuck his round eye-glass deliberately between his nose and his eyebrow, and stared at the student who ventured not to share his "fears." That, however, was not the way to confuse Nejdánof; on the contrary, he immediately drew himself up, and also stared at the elegant official, and just as suddenly as he had felt in Mariánna a friend he felt in Kalloméitsef an enemy. Kalloméitsef, too, had the same feeling: he dropped his eye-glass, turned away and tried to smile, but made nothing of it. Anna Zakhárovna alone, who secretly worshipped him, mutely took his part, and felt more wrath than ever at the unwished-for guest who was separating her from Kólia.

Soon after this the dinner ended. The company went on to the terrace to drink coffee. Sipiágin and Kalloméitsef lighted cigars. The former offered Nejdánof an excellent regalia, but he declined it.

"Ah, yes," exclaimed Sipiágin, "I had forgotten; you only smoke your own cigarettes."

"Curious taste!" remarked Kalloméitsef between his teeth.

Nejdánof nearly broke out. "I know the difference

between a regalia and a cigarette very well, but I do not choose to be under obligations," almost sprang from his tongue. He restrained himself, but scored this second insult to his enemy's "debit."

"Mariánna," suddenly said Sipiágina, in a loud voice, "don't stand on ceremony before a stranger; smoke your cigarette. The more," she added, turning to Nejdánof, "that in your society, I have been told, all ladies smoke?"

"Just so," said Nejdánof, drily. This was the first word he had said to Sipiágina.

"Ah, I do not smoke," she continued, gently closing her velvety eyes. "I am behind the age."

Mariánna slowly and carefully, as if to annoy her aunt, drew out a cigarette and a match-box, and began to smoke. Nejdánof also produced a cigarette, and asked Mariánna for a light.

It was a lovely evening. Kólia and Anna Zakhárovna went into the garden; the rest of the company remained on the terrace about an hour, enjoying the air. The conversation was animated. Kalloméitself attacked literature; Sipiágin in this also declared himself a liberal, demanded its independence, proved its value, and even recalled Châteaubriand, and the fact that the Emperor Alexándre Pávlovitch had granted him the order of St. Andrew the First-Called. Nejdánof did not interfere in this controversy. Sipiágina looked at him with an expression as if, on the one hand, she approved his modest reticence, on the other, was rather astonished at it.

For tea they all went into the drawing-room.

"We have a very bad habit, Alexéi Dmítritch," said Sipiágin to Nejdánof; "in the evening we play at cards, and at a forbidden game, too,—stukólka, just fancy! I do not ask you to join us, besides Mariánna will be so good as to play us something on the piano. You are fond of music, I hope?" And without waiting

for an answer, Sipiágin took up a pack of cards. Mariáanna sat down to the piano, and played a few of Mendelssohn's Songs without Words, neither well nor badly. "Charmant! charmant! Quel toucher!" called Kalloméitsef from his distant position, as if in ecstasy, but politeness was the chief motive of his exclamation, and Nejdánof, in spite of the hope Sipiágin had expressed, had no taste for music.

Meanwhile, Sipiágin and his wife, Kalloméitsef and Anna Zakhárovna had sat down to cards; Kólia came in to say good-night, and, having received his parents' blessing, and a large glass of milk instead of tea, went off to bed. His father called after him that to-morrow he would begin his lessons with Alexéi Dmítritch. Soon after, seeing that Nejdánof was mooning about the room with nothing to do, and was pretending to be intent on a photograph album which he was turning over, Sipiágin asked him not to stand upon ceremony, and to go to rest if he liked, as he was probably tired after his journey, for the motto of their house was "liberty."

Nejdánof took advantage of the permission, and having bowed all round went out; at the door he met Mariáanna, and, having again glanced at her face, felt sure that they would be companions, though far from smiling at him, she even frowned.

He found his room full of fresh perfume, the windows having been open all day. In the garden, just opposite, a nightingale was pouring out its clear, abrupt, ringing song; over the round tops of the limes the night sky reddened dimly and warmly; it was the moon rising. Nejdánof lit his candle; little grey moths at once flew in from the dark garden and came to the light, turning and fluttering round it, but the breeze which blew them away made the blueish-yellow flame of the candle flicker.

"Curious!" thought Nejdánof, as he got into his

bed. "The people of the house are good, I think, liberal, sympathetic even, and yet I feel uncomfortable. A Kammerherr a Kammerjunker Well, morning's wiser than evening. I mustn't be sentimental."

But at that moment in the garden a watchman beat his board sturdily, and a long cry rang out, "List en!"

"Obser ve!" answered another dismal voice.

"Good Heavens! One might as well be in a fortress!"

CHAPTER VIII.

NEJDANOF woke early, and without waiting for the appearance of the servant dressed and went down into the garden. It was a very large and lovely garden, and was beautifully kept; hired labourers were scraping the paths; through the bright green of the shrubs glanced the red handkerchiefs worn by a troop of peasant girls, armed with hoes. Nejdánof strolled to the pond; the morning mist was drifting off it, but it was still steaming in places, in shady inlets. The sun still low, threw a pink hue over the broad expanse, smooth as molten lead. Five carpenters were busy round a raft; by it lay a new, brightly painted boat, which heaved gently from side to side, sending each time a slight ripple through the water. Voices sounded from time to time suppressed and low; the whole scene breathed of morning, of quiet, and fresh, vigorous work, breathed of discipline and the regularity of well-ordered life. And at the turn of an alley there stood before Nejdánof the very incarnation of order and regularity, Sipiágin himself.

He had on a green coat, somewhat like a dressing-gown, and a checked cap; he was leaning on an English bamboo cane, and his clean-shaved face expressed satisfaction; he was going to look over his establishment. He met Nejdánof with a civil greeting.

"Aha!" he exclaimed. "Young and early, I see" (by which somewhat ill-applied saying he probably

wished to show his satisfaction that Nejdánof, like himself, had not remained late in bed). We drink tea together at eight, and breakfast at twelve; at ten you will give Kólia his first lesson in Russian, and at two in history; to-morrow, the 9th of May, is his name-day,* and he will have no lessons, but I beg you will begin to-day."

Nejdánof inclined his head, and Sipiágin, waving his hand quickly to and fro before his face after the French manner, passed on, whirling his cane about and whistling, not in the least like an important official or statesman, but like a plain Russian country gentleman.

Till eight o'clock Nejdánof remained in the garden, enjoying the shade of the trees, the fresh air, and the singing of the birds; the clamour of the gong called him in, and he found all the company in the dining-room. Valentína Mikháilovna was very friendly; in her morning costume she seemed to him the very perfection of beauty. Mariánna's face expressed its usual hardness and concentration. Exactly at ten o'clock took place the first lesson, in the presence of Valentína Mikháilovna; she began by inquiring of Nejdánof whether she should be in the way, and remained extremely quiet the whole time. Kólia turned out an intelligent boy; after a few unavoidable hesitations and confusions the lesson went off satisfactorily. Valentína Mikháilovna seemed to be favourably impressed by Nejdánof, and spoke to him amicably several times. He did not respond, but his resistance was slight. She also came to the second lesson, on Russian history, saying, with a smile, that she required a tutor on that subject as much as Kólia, and behaved as sedately and quietly as before.

From three to five Nejdánof sat in his room and wrote letters to Petersburg; he felt fairly well,

* The actual day of birth is not kept in Russia, but is replaced by the feast of the patron saint, generally not far distant.

he was not dull, not melancholy, his high-strung nerves were gradually being relaxed. During dinner they again suffered a little, though Kalloméitsef was absent. The attentions which were shown him rather angered him. Then his neighbour, the old maid, Anna Zakhárovna, was sulky, and decidedly hostile. Mariánna continued serious, and Kólia kicked him rather too unceremoniously under the table. Sipiágin also seemed rather out of spirits. He was very dissatisfied with the manager of his paper-mill, a German, whom he had engaged at a large salary. Sipiágin began to abuse all Germans, and declared himself a Slavophile to some extent, though not a fanatic; then mentioned a young Russian, a certain Solómin, who, as he had heard, had put the factory of a neighbouring merchant in excellent order; he expressed a great wish to become acquainted with this Solómin. In the evening arrived Kalloméitsef, whose estate was only some six miles from Arjánœ, as Sipiágin's village was called. The arbitrator of the peace* also came, one of those landowners whom Lérmontof has so well drawn—"all hidden in cravat, his coat to his heels, moustaches, a tenor voice, and a dull eye." There came too another neighbour with a miserable toothless face, but very neatly dressed; also the district doctor, a very bad doctor, but fond of using scientific terms; he affirmed, for instance, that he preferred Kukólnik to Púshkin, because Kukólnik had plenty of "protoplasm." They all sat down to stukólka. Nejdánof slipped away to his room, and read and wrote till past midnight.

The next day, the 9th of May, was Kólia's name-day. The whole house, in three open carriages, with footmen behind, set off to the church, which was not a quarter of a mile away. Everything was very grand

* An official appointed at the emancipation to regulate difficulties arising between landlords and peasants.

and formal. Sipiágin put on the ribbon of his order. Valentína Mikháilovna was dressed in a lovely Paris gown of pale lilac, and in church during the mass prayed from a small book bound in crimson velvet, which prayer-book greatly puzzled several old men ; one at last could not contain himself, and asked his neighbours, "What witch's tricks is she at, God forgive me?"* The sweet scent of the flowers which filled the church was mixed with the strong smell of newly prepared sheepskins, tarred boots and shoes, and above all rose the pleasant but somewhat oppressive smell of the incense. The choristers tried their best ; with the help of some workmen they even attempted part-singing. There was a moment when all present felt rather uncomfortable. The tenor voice, which belonged to a workman named Klim, who was in a rapid consumption, was emitting terribly flat sounds, all alone without any support ; terrible they were, but if they had stopped the whole concert would infallibly have broken down. However, everything passed off—somehow. Father Cyprian, a priest of the most reverend appearance, in full costume, read a most instructive sermon from a book ; unfortunately the worthy father considered it necessary to bring in the names of certain most wise Assyrian kings, over the pronunciation of which he became much embarrassed, and though he showed off his learning, yet it cost him much perspiration. Nejdánof, who had not been inside a church for a long time, slipped into a corner among the peasant women ; they only looked at him occasionally, as they crossed themselves assiduously, now bowing low, now gravely wiping their children's noses ; but the peasant girls in new frocks, with pendants on their foreheads, and the boys in carefully girt shirts, with embroidered shoulders and red patches on their sleeves, inspected the new worshipper atten-

* Prayer-books are hardly ever used in Russian churches.

tively, turning right round to stare at him. Nejdánof looked at them and many thoughts passed through his head.

After the mass, which continued rather a long time—the prayer to St. Nicholas, the worker of miracles, being, as is known, perhaps the longest of all the prayers of the Orthodox Church—all the clergy, at Sipiágin's invitation, set off to the house. Here, after having performed a few more ceremonies proper to the occasion, and even sprinkled the rooms with holy water, they sat down to an excellent breakfast, during which proceeded the usual conversations, most admirable indeed, but somewhat tedious. The master and mistress of the house, though they never ate anything at that hour, nevertheless tasted the breakfast. Sipiágin even told a story, highly proper, though laughable, which, considering his red ribbon and his dignity, produced a most excellent impression; while in Father Cyprian it roused a feeling of gratitude and astonishment. In return, and perhaps to show that he, too, on occasion could tell something worth knowing, Father Cyprian recounted his conversation with the bishop when the latter, in making a tour of his diocese, had summoned all the clergy of the district to the monastery in the town.

"He is severe, very severe," affirmed Father Cyprian. "First asks one about one's parish, about matters generally, and then examines one. He turned to me, too. 'Which is the feast-day of thy church?' 'The Transfiguration of the Saviour,' I answer. 'Dost know the collect for that day?' 'Of course I know it.' 'Sing it.' Of course I began, 'Christ our God was transfigured on the Mount . . . ' 'Stop! What is the Transfiguration, and how is one to interpret it?' 'Simply enough,' I answer; 'Christ wished to show His glory to His disciples' 'Good,' he answered: 'here is an image for you as a remem-

brance.' I fell at the bishop's knees and thanked him. So I did not go away empty."

"I have the honour to know the Very Reverend personally," remarked Sipiágin, with solemnity; "a most worthy pastor!"

"Most worthy," echoed Father Cyprian; "only he trusts the superior priests too much."

Valentína Mikháilovna spoke of the school for peasants, and pointed out Mariánna as a future teacher; whereupon the deacon to whom was entrusted the care of this school, a man of mighty frame, with a head of hair* which vaguely recalled the neatly combed tail of a trotter from the Orloff stud, endeavoured to express his approval, but, forgetting the strength of his voice, uttered so deep a sound that he frightened himself and astonished everybody else. After that the clergy soon took their leave.

Kólia, in a new jacket with gilt buttons, was the hero of the day. He had presents made him, he was congratulated, his hands were kissed at the front door and at the back by workmen, servants, old women, and young girls alike; as for the peasants, they, as in the days of serfdom, mostly buzzed about the tables which were set out in front of the house, and laden with pasties and pots of whiskey. Kólia blushed and was pleased, was proud and shy by turns; sometimes kept close to his parents, sometimes ran out of the room.

At dinner, Sipiágin ordered champagne to be brought in, and, before drinking his son's health, made a speech. He spoke of the meaning of the phrase, "To do one's duty in this world," then of the path in which he wished his Nikolái to tread—for thus he called his son—and of what was expected from him, firstly by his family, secondly by his class and society generally, thirdly by the nation,—"Yes, gentlemen,

* Priests in Russia do not shave or cut their hair.

the nation"—and fourthly by the Government! Sipiágin, gradually increasing in warmth, at length reached real eloquence (when in imitation of Sir Robert Peel he thrust his hand into the breast of his coat), grew enthusiastic over the word science, and finished his speech with the Latin exclamation "laboremus," which he at once translated into Russian. Kólia, glass in hand, went round the table to thank his father and kiss everybody.

Nejdánof again happened to interchange glances with Mariánna. They probably both had the same feeling, but not a word was said.

Yet all that Nejdánof saw seemed to him amusing and even interesting, rather than vexing or unpleasant, and the agreeable mistress of the house struck him as a clever woman who knew that she was playing a part, and at the same time was secretly pleased that there was another clever and observant person present who understood her. Nejdánof, probably, did not at all suspect how much his vanity was flattered by her conduct towards him.

The next day the lessons recommenced and life ran on in its usual groove.

So a week passed insensibly. The best idea that can be given of Nejdánof's feelings and thoughts may be formed from an extract from a letter of his to a certain Sílin, his former schoolfellow and best friend. This Sílin lived not in Petersburg, but in a distant town, with a wealthy relative, on whom he entirely depended. He was so tied down by the position he was in that he could not possibly dream of ever escaping from it; he was a sickly and timid man, without much depth, but of a remarkably pure mind. He took no interest in politics, read but few books, played the flute from want of anything else to do, and was afraid of young ladies. Sílin loved Nejdánof deeply; his heart altogether was an affectionate one.

Nejdánof never opened his mind so freely as to Vladímír Sílin ; when he wrote to him it always seemed as if he were conversing with a being, who, though well known and friendly, yet inhabited some other world, or else with his own conscience. Nejdánof could not even imagine ever again living in the same town as Sílin merely as comrades. He would probably have instantly cooled in his friendship, for they had but little in common ; but he wrote to him constantly and willingly, and without the least reserve. In his intercourse with others, especially when writing, everything seemed false or exaggerated ; with Sílin never. Sílin, who wrote badly, answered in short awkward sentences, but Nejdánof did not need long answers ; he knew all the same that his friend devoured every word, as the dust of the road absorbs drops of rain, that he kept his secrets as sacred, and that, lost in dull and hopeless solitude, he only lived through the life of his friend. Nejdánof never told a soul of his intercourse with Sílin, and valued it greatly.

“ Well, my friend, my worthy Vladímír,” for so he always called him, and not without reason. “ Congratulate me ; I have found food to hand, and can now rest and collect my strength. I am living as tutor in the house of a certain wealthy statesman named Sipiágin. I teach his son, and have excellent dinners (in my life I have never eaten so well) ; I sleep soundly, take long walks in a lovely country, and, best of all, I have escaped for a time from the guardianship of my Petersburg friends ; at first I was exceedingly dull, but now I feel all the better. I shall soon have to take up the business you wot of, to ‘ go to the basket, as I call myself a mushroom,’ (that is the reason why I have been allowed to come here), but in the mean time I can live that precious animal life, put on fat, and even write verses, if the fancy take me.

My observations, as people call them, I will put off to another time; the property seems in good order, except perhaps that the manufactory has gone a little to the dogs; the peasants who have bought themselves off* seem difficult to approach; as for the hired servants, they all have the most highly respectable faces. But all that we will talk about by-and-by. The people of the house are polite and liberal in their ideas; Sipiágin is all condescension, while now and then he suddenly soars up through the clouds—a most admirably educated man! The lady is a great beauty, and I should say somewhat sly, always observing one, and so soft! Simply has no bones at all! I am rather afraid of her; you of course know what a ladies' man I am! I have neighbours at table, there is an old woman always in the way. . . . but I am most interested by a girl, a relation or companion, Heaven only knows! to whom I have not said two words, but whom I feel to be a fruit off the same tree as bore me."

Here followed a description of Mariánna and of all her ways; then he continued,—

"She is unhappy, proud, self-conscious, reserved, but, above all, unhappy; of that I have no doubt. But why she should be unhappy up to this time I do not know. That she is straightforward I am sure; whether she is good is another question. But can perfect goodness exist in women who are not stupid? And should it? However, I know very little about women. The lady of the house does not like her, and she returns the feeling. But which is in the right I know not. I am inclined to think that the mistress is wrong, as she is so very polite to this girl; while the latter twitches her eyebrows nervously, even when she is only talking to her. Yes, she is very

* Under the Emancipation Act, the domestic servants, a very large class in Russia, came under different arrangements.

nervous; in that, too, she is like me. And she is in much the same situation as I am, though probably not in exactly the same manner.

“When all this is a little more unravelled I will write to you”

“She hardly ever converses with me, as I have already told you, but in the few words she has said (always suddenly and unexpectedly) there rings a certain harsh frankness which I like.

“By the way, does your old relation still keep you on short commons, and make no signs of dying?”

“Have you read in the *Messenger of Europe* the article about the last pretenders in the government of Orenburg? This was in the year 1834, brother! I do not like the review, and the writer is a conservative, but the article is interesting and may suggest ideas”

CHAPTER IX.

THE middle of May had already come and gone, and the first warm days of summer had appeared. One day Nejdánof, after finishing the history lesson, went into the garden, and thence crossed into a copse of birch-trees which adjoined it on one side. Part of the copse had been cut down and sold some fifteen years back, and a thick underwood had grown up all over the places which had been cut. The stems of the trees stood close together like pillars of dull silver, with grey rings at intervals; the tiny leaves shone green and bright, exactly as if they had been washed and varnished; the spring grass shot up its sharp little tongues through the smooth carpet of dark-brown leaves fallen the autumn before. Through the copse ran little rides; yellow-billed blackbirds, with their sharp, frightened cry, flew across them, low down, close to the earth, and bustled headlong into the underwood. Nejdánof, after half an hour's stroll, at length sat down on the stump of a tree, surrounded by grey chips; they lay in a heap as they had fallen when they first flew from the axe. Many times had the snow covered them in winter and melted off them in spring, yet no one had touched them. Nejdánof was sitting with his back to a dense wall of young birch-trees in a short though dark shade; he thought of nothing, but yielded himself up

entirely to that peculiar feeling of spring-time which, both in young and old hearts, is mingled with melancholy: in the young, the excited melancholy of anticipation; in the old, the immovable melancholy of regret

Suddenly Nejdánof heard the sound of advancing footsteps.

It was not a single person, neither a peasant in bark shoes or heavy boots, nor a bare-footed woman. Two people were advancing steadily without hurry, and the rustling of a woman's dress could be heard.

All at once a deep, hollow man's voice broke the silence.

"So that is your final decision? Never?"

"Never!" repeated another, a female voice, which Nejdánof seemed to know, and at that moment, at the corner of the ride, which here took a turn round the underwood, appeared Mariánna, accompanied by a dark, black-eyed man, whom Nejdánof had never seen before.

They stopped short at the sight of Nejdánof, and he was so astonished that he did not even rise from the stump upon which he was sitting. Mariánna blushed up to the roots of her hair, but instantly curled her lip with contempt. To whom did the sneer apply? To herself, for blushing, or to Nejdánof? Her companion contracted his thick eyebrows, and rolled the yellowish whites of his restless eyes. Then he glanced at Mariánna, and both of them, turning their backs on Nejdánof, walked away in silence, without hurrying, followed by his astonished gaze.

Half an hour after he returned home to his room, and when he went to the dining-room, summoned by the sound of the gong, he there saw the same dark stranger who had come upon him in the copse. Sipiágin introduced him to Nejdánof as his "beau-

frè," the brother of Valentína Mikháilovna, Sergéi Mikháilovitch Markélof.

"I hope, gentlemen, you will make friends and like one another," exclaimed Sipiágin, with that superbly condescending though absent smile which was peculiar to him.

Markélof bowed in silence ; Nejdánof did the same ; while Sipiágin, slightly throwing back his little head and shrugging his shoulders, moved away, as much as to say, "I have introduced you, and whether you do make friends and like one another or not is a matter of absolute indifference to me !"

Then Valentína Mikháilovna approached them as they stood motionless, introduced them again, and addressed her brother with that peculiarly bright and caressing expression which seemed to come into her beautiful eyes whenever she wished.

"Why, mon cher Serge, you have entirely forgotten us ! You did not even come for Kólia's name-day. Or have you so much business to attend to ? He is introducing certain new arrangements with his peasants," she turned to Nejdánof : "most original they are, too ; he gives them three-quarters of everything, and keeps a quarter for himself, and he still thinks that his share is too large."

"My sister is fond of joking," said Markélof in his turn to Nejdánof, "but I am ready to agree with her that for one man to take a quarter of that which belongs to a hundred is really too much."

"Have you remarked, Alexéi Dmítritch, that I am fond of joking ?" inquired Sipiágina, with the same caressing softness in her voice and look.

Nejdánof had not found an answer when Kalloméitsef was announced. Sipiágina advanced to meet him, and a few minutes later the butler appeared and announced in a sing-song voice that dinner was ready

During dinner Nejdánof could not keep his eyes off Mariánna and Markélof. They were sitting side by side, with their eyes downcast, their lips tightly closed, and a severe and gloomy, almost angry, expression on their faces. What seemed strangest to Nejdánof was how Markélof could be Sipiágina's brother, there were so few points of resemblance. One certainly there was, they both had dark complexions; but in Valentína Mikháilovna the clear olive of her face, arms, and shoulders formed one of her chief beauties, while in her brother it verged on that colour which polite people call bronze, but which to a Russian eye recalls—a boot. Markélof's hair was curly, his nose slightly hooked, his lips thick, his cheeks hollow, his sides lank, and his hands sinewy. In fact he was sinewy and dry all over, and he spoke in a harsh, abrupt, metallic voice. His eyes were dull, his appearance sullen; a bilious man altogether. He ate little, and most of the time made pellets of his bread, sometimes casting his eyes at Kalloméitsef; the latter had just returned from town from an interview with the governor about a somewhat unpleasant matter, about which, however, he was scrupulously silent, while chattering the whole time.

Sipiágin as usual put him down when he went too far, but laughed immensely at his anecdotes and bonmots though he affirmed "*qu'il est un affreux réactionnaire.*" Kalloméitsef among other things went into ecstasies over the name by which peasants—"oui, oui, les simples mougiks"—call barristers. "Barkers, barkers!" he repeated with delight, "*ce peuple russe est délicieux!*" Then he related how once in visiting a national school he had asked the boys the following question, "What is a struthokamel?"* and as no one could answer him, not even the teacher, he asked another question, "What is a pithek?"* adding

* Eccentric names for an ostrich and an ape.

Khémnitser's verse. "The silly pithek, mimic of beasts' faces." And yet no one answered. "That is all the good your national schools do!"

"But," said Valentína Mikháilovna, "I myself do not know what these beasts are!"

"Nor do you, madam, need to know," exclaimed Kalloméitsef.

"Then why should the people?"

"Because it is very much better that they should have heard of a struthokamel or a pithek than of your Proudhons and your Adam Smiths!"

Here Sipiágin again checked Kalloméitsef, and declared that Adam Smith was one of the lights of human thought, and that one ought to suck in his principles (here he poured himself out a glass of Château d'Yquem) together with one's mother's (here he raised it to his nose and smelt it) milk! And the wine disappeared. Kalloméitsef also drank the wine and praised it.

Markélof paid no particular attention to the declamations of the Kammerjunker from Petersburg, but looked at Nejdánof inquiringly once or twice, and, shooting a ball of bread from his fingers, nearly hit the nose of the eloquent guest.

Sipiágin left his brother-in-law alone, neither did Valentína Mikháilovna talk to him; it was evident that both husband and wife were used to regarding Markélof as an eccentric being whom it was best not to excite.

After dinner Markélof went into the billiard-room to smoke a pipe, and Nejdánof went to his room. In the passage he met Mariánna. He tried to pass her, but she stopped him by an abrupt movement of her hand.

"Mr. Nejdánof," she said, in a somewhat uncertain voice, "your opinion of me ought to be of little moment to me; but all the same I think it . . . I

think” (she hesitated for a word), “I think it proper to tell you that when you met me and Mr. Markélof in the copse to-day Tell me, you probably wondered why we looked so confused, and how it was we had come there, just as if we had made an appointment?”

“It certainly seemed to me rather strange” began Nejdánof.

“Mr. Markélof proposed to me,” interrupted Mariánna, “and I refused him. That is all I had to tell you; so good-night. And think of me as you will.”

She turned away and went quickly along the passage.

Nejdánof returned to his room, and, sitting down before the window, fell a-thinking.

“What a strange girl! and why this wild outburst, this uncalled-for frankness? What is it—a wish to be original, or simply a love of effect, or pride? Most likely pride. She cannot endure the smallest suspicion. She cannot bear the idea that another should have a false opinion of her. A strange girl!”

So thought Nejdánof; while on the terrace underneath the conversation turned on him, and he could hear every word.

“My nose tells me,” said Kalloméitsef, “my nose tells me that he is a ‘red.’ While I was still in the bureau of the Governor-General of Moscow, on a special mission, avec Ladislás, I learned something about those gentlemen, the ‘reds,’ and dissenters too. I had a particular faculty for scenting them.” And Kalloméitsef recounted how once, near Moscow, he caught by the heel an old dissenter, on whom he had made a descent with the police, and who had almost jumped out of the cottage-window. “And the scoundrel up to that minute had sat so quietly on the bench!”

Kalloméitsef forgot to add that that same old man,

when put into prison, refused all food and starved himself to death.

"And your new tutor," continued the zealous Kammerjunker, "is a 'red' for certain. Have you noticed that he never bows first?"

"Why should he bow first?" remarked Sipiágina. "I, on the contrary, like that in him."

"I am a visitor in the house where he serves," exclaimed Kalloméitsef. "Yes, serves for money, comme un salarié . . . Therefore I am his superior, and he is bound to bow first to me."

"You are extremely particular, my most excellent friend," said Sipiágin, emphasizing the "most"; "but, excuse me, all that has a very ancient flavour. I have bought his services, his work, certainly, but he remains a free man."

"He does not feel the bit," continued Kalloméitsef, "the bit,—le frein! All those 'reds' are the same. I tell you I have a wonderful scent for them. Only Ladislas perhaps can equal me in that respect. If that tutor of yours were to fall into my hands I would give him a lesson, I would! He would sing a different song then; and we should see his hat coming off; it would be a real pleasure."

"You silly boaster!" Nejdánof was on the point of shouting from his window. But at that moment the door of his room opened, and, not a little to his astonishment, walked in Markélof.

CHAPTER X.

NEJDANOF rose from his seat to meet him ; but Markélof advanced straight up to him without a bow or a smile, and asked if he were Alexéi Dmítrief Nejdánof, a student of the University of Petersburg.

"Yes ; that is my name," answered Nejdánof.

Markélof took an open letter from a side pocket.

"In that case, read this. From Vasíli Nikoláevitch," he added, lowering his voice significantly.

Nejdánof unfolded and read the letter. It was a kind of half-official circular, in which the bearer, Sergéi Markélof, was introduced as one of "ours," worthy of entire confidence. Further on followed a paragraph insisting on the necessity of immediate and concerted action, and on the diffusion of certain ideas. The circular was addressed to Nejdánof, among others, as a trustworthy man.

Nejdánof gave Markélof his hand, asked him to be seated, and sat down himself. Markélof, without saying anything, lighted a cigarette ; Nejdánof followed his example.

"Have you had time to become acquainted with the peasants round here ?" asked Markélof at length.

"No, not as yet."

"Have you been here long ?"

"Nearly a fortnight."

"Much to do?"

"Not overmuch."

Markélof coughed discontentedly.

"The people round here are somewhat stupid," he continued, "and unenlightened. We must instruct them. Great poverty, and no one to tell them whence that poverty arises."

"The peasants who were your brother-in-law's serfs are not badly off as far as one can judge," remarked Nejdánof.

"My brother-in-law is a clever man, and knows admirably how to distract attention. The peasants are, as you say, fairly well off; but he has a manufactory. It is on that we ought to concentrate our endeavours. Give a dig there with your spade; it is like an ant-heap,—it will all be on the move at once. Have you any pamphlets with you?"

"A few, not many."

"I will get you some. But how could you be so remiss?"

Nejdánof made no answer. ~~Markélof~~ also remained silent, and only blew the smoke through his nostrils.

"What a scoundrel that Kalloméitsef is!" he suddenly said. "At dinner I felt inclined to get up and go over to that gentleman, and to smash all his impertinent face into bits, that others might be warned. But no! There is more important work to be done than thrashing a Kammerjunker. This is not a time to be angry with fools for uttering stupid words; it is a time for preventing them from committing stupid acts."

Nejdánof nodded, and Markélof resumed his cigarette.

"Among all this mass of servants there is one useful man," he began again; "not your servant Iván, he is as dull as a fish; but another one who

serves at table ; his name is Kírrill" (this Kírrill was a notorious drunkard). "You notice him. He is a dissolute fellow, but we must not be too particular. And what do you think of my sister?" he added, suddenly raising his head, and fixing his yellow eyes on Nejdánof. "She is more cunning even than my brother-in-law. What do you think of her?"

"I think she is a very agreeable and pleasant lady ; she is certainly very handsome."

"H'm! With what nicety you gentlemen from Petersburg express yourselves! Astonishing. Well, and about—" he began, but suddenly stopped ; his face grew dark, and he did not finish the sentence. "I see we must have a good talk," he continued. "Here it is impossible. Deuce knows but they may be listening at the doors now. Do you know what I mean to propose? To-day is Saturday, and I suppose you give my nephew no lessons to-morrow? Is it not so?"

"We have a repetition to-morrow at three o'clock."

"A repetition! Just as if we were at the theatre! I suppose it is my sister who invents such words. But it is all the same. I want you to come with me at once ; my village is only ten versts away. I have good horses, which will take us there in a twinkling ; you can sleep at my house, spend the morning with me, and by three o'clock you shall be back here. Do you agree?"

"I agree," said Nejdánof. Since Markélof's entrance he had felt excited and uncomfortable. The suddenness of their intimacy had confused him, yet at the same time he felt drawn towards him. He knew and understood that before him was a man, possibly dull, but undoubtedly honourable and strong-willed. Besides which, there was the strange meeting in the copse,—Mariánna's unexpected explanation

"Capital!" exclaimed Markélof. "Do you get ready, and I will go and order the horses to be put to. You have no need, I hope, to ask these people for permission?"

"I had better tell them. I had rather not absent myself without doing that."

"I will tell them," said Markélof. "Do not be uneasy. They are now hard at work at cards, and will not remark your absence. My brother-in-law is aiming at becoming a statesman, and the only point he has in his favour is that he plays cards well. And why not? many rise through that accomplishment! So be ready. I will arrange everything at once."

Markélof went out; an hour later Nejdánof was sitting by his side on a large leathern cushion in a broad, rickety, very old and very comfortable tarantas.* A tiny coachman sat on the box, and whistled constantly with a pleasant bird-like chirrup; three piebald horses, with their black manes and tails plaited up, carried them quickly over a good road. It struck ten o'clock as they started, and in the dim twilight trees, copses, fields, meadows, and hills slipped smoothly past, some backwards, some forwards, according as they were near or far.

Markélof's little village lay three versts from the Government town, from which Sipiágin's was distant seven versts. It had only 200 desiátines of land, and brought in a revenue of about 700 roubles a year.†

To reach Borziónkovo, for so it was called, they had to cross the town. Before the new acquaintances had had time to exchange fifty words they were passing through the rows of ill-built little houses forming the suburbs, with shingled roofs full of holes,

* A kind of rough travelling carriage or covered cart.

† A desiátine = 2½ acres; a rouble = about 2s. 6d.

and with dim patches of light in their rickety windows. Then the stone paving of the town sounded under the wheels, making the tarantas jump and roll from side to side; while past them slipped the two-storied merchants' houses, with their monstrous façades, the churches with their columns, the taverns It was a Saturday evening; there was no one to be seen in the streets, but the taverns were still full of people. From them there issued hoarse voices, drunken songs, and the wheezing sound of concertinas; when a door opened suddenly there came a puff of foul heat, of the strong smell of spirits, together with the red glare of the lights. Before almost every tavern stood the peasants' carts and the shaggy, big-bellied jades, which, with their untidy heads almost touching the ground, seemed to be asleep; a wild-looking peasant without a belt, with his winter cap falling over the back of his neck, would come out, and leaning on the shafts, remain motionless, feeling for something and waving his hands helplessly to and fro; or a stunted workman with his cap on one side, his calico shirt flying loose, and without boots—the boots having been left in the tavern—would take a few uncertain steps, stop, scratch his back, and, with a sudden exclamation, return

“That whiskey kills our Russian folk,” remarked Markélof, gloomily.

“It's all from sorrow, father Sergéi Mikháilovitch,” said the little coachman without turning round. As they passed each tavern he stopped chirruping, and seemed to become wrapped in thought.

“Go on, go on!” answered Markélof, angrily shaking his coat collar. The tarantas crossed the broad market-place, which smelt of cabbage and matting, passed the governor's house, with the striped sentry-boxes in front; the police-station, with its

signal-tower ; the boulevard, with its row of young trees just planted, and already dying ; the bazaar, resounding with the bark of dogs and the rattling of chains ; and, after getting through the barrier, and avoiding an interminable caravan (which had started in the night for the sake of coolness), found itself once more in the free country air, on the willow-planted high road, and rolled along more quickly and steadily.

Markélof—for we must say a few words of him—was six years older than his sister Sipiágina. He was educated in an artillery school, whence he came out an officer, but, having attained the rank of captain, he resigned from a disagreement with his colonel, a German. Since that time he had hated all Germans, especially Russian Germans. His father quarrelled with him on account of his resignation, and they did not meet again before the old man's death, but he left Markélof the village in which he had settled. In Petersburg he frequently met several clever persons of advanced opinions, whom he worshipped ; they finally fixed his ideas in one groove. He read little, and chiefly books connected with the "cause," especially Herzen. He retained his military habits, and lived like a Spartan or a monk. A few years back he had fallen deeply in love with a girl ; but she jilted him most unceremoniously, and married an aide-de-camp, also a German. Markélof took a hatred to all aides-de-camp. He tried to write essays on his special subject—the shortcomings of our artillery ; but he had no talent for explanation ; he could not even finish a single essay, yet he continued to cover large sheets of grey paper with his clumsy, round, childish writing. Markélof was obstinate and fearless, even to recklessness ; he could neither forgive nor forget, and was always angry, both at his own sufferings and those of all persecuted people ; and he was ready for any-

thing. His narrow mind was concentrated on one point ; all that he did not understand had no existence for him, but he despised and hated all lies and double-dealing. With people of the upper classes, the "reács," as he called them, he was abrupt and even rude ; with the people, simple ; the peasant he treated as he would a brother. He was a middling landlord ; certain socialistic notions were always whirling about his brain, which he could no more put into definite shape than he could finish his essays on the shortcomings of the artillery. He never succeeded—never and in nothing. His fellow-cadets called him the unlucky. Sincere, straightforward, passionate, and unhappy, he might, under certain circumstances, have turned out merciless and blood-thirsty, might have earned the name of a monster, but he could also have sacrificed himself without hesitation or regret.

At the third verst from the town, the tarantas suddenly entered the soft gloom of a copse of aspens, with the rustle and murmur of its invisible leaves, with its sharp aromatic odour, its breaks of uncertain light overhead and tangled shadows beneath. The moon was already above the horizon, round and red as a copper shield. Emerging from under the trees, the tarantas turned towards a small landowner's dwelling. Three lighted windows stood out square and sharp on the front of the low house which now concealed the moon ; the gates were wide open, and looked as if they were never shut. In the yard through the darkness could be seen a large kibitka,* to the back of which were fastened a couple of white post-horses ; and two puppies, also white, sprang out from some hiding-place or other, and set up a prolonged but not vicious bark. A stir was heard in the house, the tarantas rolled up to the door, and

* Also a kind of rough travelling-cart.

Markélof, as he got out slowly, feeling with his foot for the step which the indigenous blacksmith had as usual put in the most inconvenient place, said to Nejdánof,—

“Here we are at home, and you will find some guests whom you know well, but whom you do not in the least expect to meet. Come in!”

CHAPTER XI.

like one of the guys

THESE guests proved to be our old friends Ostrodúmof and Mashúrina. They were sitting in the small, badly furnished parlour of Markélof's house, drinking beer and smoking by the light of a kerosene lamp. They were not surprised at Nejdánof's arrival, for they knew that Markélof meant to bring him if possible ; but Nejdánof was greatly surprised at seeing them. When he entered, Ostrodúmof said, "Good-day, brother," and nothing more, while Mashúrina first turned very red, and then gave him her hand. Markélof explained to Nejdánof that they had both been sent down there for the common cause, which would soon be taking a definite shape ; that they had left Petersburg about a week ; that Ostrodúmof would remain in the Government of S. to spread the doctrines, while Mashúrina was to go to K. to see a certain person.

Markélof suddenly grew excited, though no one contradicted him. With his eyes sparkling as he gnawed his moustache, he began to speak, in a hollow and agitated though distinct voice, of the iniquities which were being perpetrated ; of the necessity for immediate action, saying that everything was ready, and that only cowards could hesitate ; that a certain amount of force would be necessary, as is the stroke of a lancet on an abscess, however mature that abscess may be. This comparison with a lancet evidently

pleased him, for he repeated it several times ; not that it was his own invention, for he had read it somewhere. It seemed as if, having lost all hope of sympathy from Mariánna, he had now nothing to consider, and thought of nothing but how the sooner to set to work at the "cause." His words fell like the blows of an axe, abruptly, sharply, and angrily, without any attempt at eloquence ; they flowed from his pale lips one after another, monotonously and weightily, like the hoarse bark of an old and vigilant house-dog. He said that he knew the neighbouring peasants well, and the artisans also ; that there were useful men among them—for instance, Iereméi of Galapliók—men who were ready for anything at any moment. This Iereméi of Galapliók was constantly on his tongue. After every ten words or so he struck the table with his hand, not with the palm, but with the side, at the same time extending in the air his left hand, with the first finger outstretched. Those dry, hairy hands, that finger, that deep voice, those fiery eyes, produced a strong impression on those present. On the road Markélof had said little to Nejdánof ; his bile had accumulated, and now it overflowed.

Mashúrina and Ostrodúmof showed their approval by a smile, a glance, sometimes a brief exclamation, while Nejdánof was conscious of a strange struggle within him. At first he endeavoured to answer Markélof ; he hinted at the evils of too great haste, of premature and ill-considered action ; but he wondered most how it was that everything seemed decided, that there was no hesitation, no consideration of circumstances, nor even any endeavour to ascertain what the people really wanted. Then all his nerves became highly strung and excited, and, in a kind of wild fit, his voice breaking with anger, and almost with tears of wrath in his eyes, he began to speak in the same tone as Markélof, going even further than he did. It would

be difficult to say what moved him to do this. Was it repentance because he had as it were fallen off a little of late, was he angry with himself or others, did he wish to drown some hidden voice, was it perhaps the wish to show himself off before the newly arrived emissaries, or did Markélof's words really act upon him and fire his blood? The conversation continued till morning; Ostrodúmof and Mashúrína did not rise from their seats; Markélof and Nejdánof did not sit down. Markélof stood in one place, exactly like a sentinel; Nejdánof walked up and down the room, sometimes hurriedly, sometimes slowly. They talked of means and ways, of the part which each of them was to undertake; they sorted and tied up various pamphlets and broad-sheets; they talked of a certain dissenting merchant named Goloushkin, a trustworthy though uneducated man; of Kisliakóf, a young propagandist, very well informed, but somewhat too quick and too sure of his own talents; they also mentioned the name of Solómin

"Is that the manager of the cotton-mill?" asked Nejdánof, remembering what had been said about him at the Sipiágins' table.

"That is the man," said Markélof; "you must make his acquaintance. We have not sounded him yet, but he is a valuable man."

Iereméi of Galapliók again made his appearance; also Kiríll from Sipiágin's, and a certain Mendeléi, nicknamed Windbag; only this same Windbag was not to be relied upon; when he was sober he was brave, but he was a coward when drunk, and he almost always was drunk.

"And among your own people," asked Nejdánof of Markélof, "are there any on whom you can rely?"

Markélof said there were, but did not name any one in particular, and began to talk about the townspeople and the seminarists, whose chief use, however, lay in

the fact that they were physically very strong, and when they set to work with their fists, then—! Nejdánof inquired about the nobles. Markélof answered that there were five or six among the younger men, especially one, a German, the most radical of all; but then it was well known you could never depend on a German, for he might always abandon or betray you! They must wait to see what news Kisliakóf could give them. Nejdánof also inquired about the soldiers. Here Markélof hesitated, pulled his long whiskers, and at length answered that nothing as yet was certain; perhaps Kisliakóf might give them some information.

“But who is this Kisliakóf?” asked Nejdánof, impatiently.

Markélof smiled meaningly and said he was a man, such a man

“However,” he added, “I do not know him well; I have only seen him twice, but what letters he writes! what letters! I will show them you; you will be astonished at his vigour. And what a worker! He has travelled from one end of Russia to the other five or six times, and from each station a letter of ten—twelve pages!”

Nejdánof looked inquiringly at Ostrodúmof, but the latter sat like a statue and did not even move an eyelid. Mashúrina contracted her lips into a bitter smile, but also—not a word! Nejdánof would have asked Markélof about the socialistic innovations on his estate, but here Ostrodúmof broke in.

“Why talk of that now? It is all the same; it will all have to be altered—afterwards.”

The conversation returned to politics. The hidden worm was again gnawing at Nejdánof, but the more he felt its bite, the louder and more merciless grew his talk. He had drunk but one glass of beer, yet he occasionally thought that he was quite drunk, for his

head turned and his heart beat painfully. When finally, after three o'clock, the discussion ceased, and the friends, without disturbing the boy who was asleep in the passage, sought their rooms, Nejdánof, before lying down, long stood motionless, looking at the floor in front of him. He seemed still to hear the perpetual, bitter, soul-rending tone which ran through all Markélof's utterances. The vanity of this man could not but be hurt; he must have been suffering; his hopes for his personal happiness had been ruined; yet how he forgot himself, how completely he gave himself up to what he considered the truth! "A narrow-minded man," thought Nejdánof. "But is it not a hundred times better to be narrow-minded as he is, than to be such,—such as I, for instance, know that I am?"

But here he revolted against his own self-depreciation. "Why do I say this? Do not I, too, know how to sacrifice myself? Wait a bit, gentlemen Even you, Páklín, shall be convinced in time that, though I am æsthetic, though I do write verses"

He tossed back his hair, ground his teeth angrily, and, hurriedly tearing off his clothes, threw himself on to the cold and damp bed.

"Good-night!" said Mashúrína's voice through the partition. "I am your neighbour."

"Good-night!" answered Nejdánof, who at that moment remembered that she had not taken her eyes off him all the evening.

"What does she want?" he whispered to himself, with a feeling of shame. "Oh, if I could only go to sleep soon!" But nerves are not easy to subdue, and the sun was already high when he at length sank into a heavy and unrefreshing sleep.

The next morning he woke late with a headache. Having dressed, he walked to the window of his room. He saw that Markélof had really no farm to

speak of. His house stood alone, not far from a copse. On one side was a small granary, a stable, a cellar, a cottage with a dilapidated thatched roof; on the other a tiny pond, a kitchen garden, a field of hemp, and another cottage with a similar roof. Further on stood an oast house, a threshing-floor, and an empty rick-yard; these were all the worldly goods which met his eye. Everything seemed poor and wretched, not as if it had decayed or been neglected, but as if it had never prospered, like a tree that has not taken root. Nejdánof went downstairs. Mashúrina was sitting in the parlour behind a tea-urn, and apparently waiting for him. She told him that Ostrodúmof had gone away for the cause and would not be back for a fortnight, and that Markélof had gone to look after his hired labourers. As the end of May was approaching, and there was no important work on hand, Markélof had taken it into his head to cut down a small birch copse at his own expense,* and had been there since early morning.

Nejdánof felt strangely fatigued in his mind. The day before so much had been said as to the impossibility of further delay, the necessity for immediate action. But what action, and how could it be immediate? It was no use asking Mashúrina; she knew no hesitation, she had no doubt as to what she was to do, viz., to go to K. Further than that she did not look. Nejdánof did not know what to say to her, and, having drunk his tea, put on his hat, and walked towards the birch wood. On the road he met some peasants, Markélof's former serfs, who had been carrying manure to the fields. He talked with them, but did not get much out of them. They too seemed tired, but with an ordinary physical fatigue, not in the least like the feeling from which he was

* Wood in Russia is almost always sold standing, and cut down by the buyer.

suffering. Their former master, they said, was a straightforward gentleman, only a bit queer ; they prophesied that he would ruin himself, for he did not know how to set about matters, and wanted to alter everything,—not like his fathers. “Then he is so learned at times ; do what you will you won’t understand him. But good enough for all that !” Nejdánof proceeded, and came on Markélof himself.

He was walking along, surrounded by a crowd of labourers. Nejdánof saw from afar how he explained something to them, talked about it, then made a hopeless gesture, as much as to say, “I give it up.” By his side walked his manager, a short-sighted young fellow, with an appearance the reverse of imposing. He incessantly repeated, “As you please, sir,” to the great disgust of his master, who expected more self-assertion from him. Nejdánof walked up to Markélof, and saw expressed on his face the same mental weariness as he felt himself. They said good-morning, and Markélof immediately began speaking, though briefly, of the questions they had discussed the day before, of the approach of a revolution, but the expression of fatigue did not quit his face. He was very dusty and hot ; his clothes were covered with chips of wood and green fibres of moss ; his voice was hoarse. The people round him were silent, a little from fright, a little because they were laughing at him. Nejdánof looked at Markélof, and again Ostrodúmof’s words rang in his ears, “What is the good of all this ? it will all have to be changed afterwards.” A labourer who had been fined began to beg Markélof to let him off. Markélof flew into a passion, and shouted at him furiously, but ended by forgiving him. “It was all the same ; it would all have to be changed afterwards.” Nejdánof asked him for horses and a conveyance to return home. Markélof seemed to be surprised at his request,

but answered that everything would be ready directly.

As he walked homeward with Nejdánof he literally staggered from fatigue.

“What is the matter?” asked Nejdánof.

“I am dead beat,” said Markélof, savagely. “Say what you will to those people, they understand nothing, and do not do what they are told. They don’t even understand Russian. They know what the word ‘part’ means, but ‘to take part,’—they don’t understand it. But, devil take it!—it’s good Russian, isn’t it? They think I want to give them a part of land.”

Markélof had been trying to explain to the peasants the principle of co-operation, and to introduce it, and they were resisting. One of them said, “The hole always was deep, but now one cannot see the bottom,” whereat all the other peasants with one accord heaved a loud sigh, which completely annihilated poor Markélof.

On arriving at the house he dismissed his workmen, and began to see about horses and a cart, also about breakfast. His household consisted of a boy, a cook, a coachman, and a certain venerable old man with hairy ears, in a long cotton caftan, who had once been his grandfather’s valet. This old man was always looking at his master in a most dismal manner, but he never did anything, and probably could not had he tried, but was ever present leaning against the wall by the door.

After breakfasting off hard-boiled eggs, kilki, and akróshka * (while the page handed mustard in an old pomade pot, vinegar in an eau-de-cologne flask), Nejdánof took his seat in the same tarantas in which he had come the evening before, but instead of three

* Kilki, a kind of small fish, preserved in salt and bay-leaves. Akróshka, an iced soup, with lumps of meat—a common and excellent Russian summer dish.

horses there were only two, the third having been lamed in shoeing. During breakfast Markélof said little, ate nothing, and only sat still, breathing heavily. He let drop a few bitter words about his own establishment, and again waved his hand.

"It is all the same; it will all have to be changed afterwards."

Mashúrina asked Nejdánof to take her as far as the town, as she had to make a few purchases.

"I can come back on foot," she said, "or a peasant will give me a seat on his cart."

Markélof accompanied them to the door, and said that he would soon send for Nejdánof again, and then (he brightened up, and seemed to take courage afresh)—then they would settle matters finally. Solómin would come; he himself was only waiting instructions from Vasíli Nikoláevitch, and then—for immediate action, as the "people" (that same people who did not understand the word "to take part") would wait no longer!

"By the way," said Nejdánof, "you wanted to show me the letters of that—what's his name?—Kisliakóf."

"Yes, later—later," answered Markélof, hurriedly. "We will do it all at the same time."

The tarantas moved off. "Be ready!" cried Markélof, for the last time. He was standing at the door, and by his side, with his unchangingly miserable look, his bent figure, his hands behind his back, smelling of black bread and fusty cotton, hearing nothing, stood the old man, his grandfather's valet, the model servant.

Mashúrina smoked her cigarette in silence till they reached the town. As they approached the barrier she suddenly gave a loud sigh.

"I am sorry for Sergéi Mikháilovitch," she said, and her face clouded over.

"He is quite worried to death," said Nejdánof. "I think his affairs are doing badly."

"Oh, it was not for that."

"What was it for, then?"

"He is an unhappy, unlucky man. Where can you find a better one? But no—no one will have him!"

Nejdánof looked at his companion. "Do you know anything?" he asked.

"I know nothing, but one feels it for oneself. Good bye, Alexéi Dmítritch!"

Mashúrina got out, and an hour afterwards Nejdánof was entering Sipiágin's court-yard. He did not feel well. He had hardly slept, and then all that talk, all that useless discussion . . .

A handsome face glanced out of a window, and smiled pleasantly at him. It was Sipiágina welcoming his return.

"What eyes she has!" he thought.

CHAPTER XII.

THERE were a great many people at dinner that day, so immediately after it was over Nejdánof took advantage of the crowd to slip away to his room. He wanted to be alone if it were only to put into order the impressions which he had gathered during his trip. At table Valentína Mikháilovna had looked at him several times with attention, but apparently had not found an opportunity of speaking to him, while Mariánna, since the unexpected outbreak which had so surprised him, seemed to be avoiding him as if ashamed. Nejdánof took up his pen; he wished to converse on paper with his friend Sílin; but he found nothing to say even to him, or possibly so many contradictory thoughts and feelings were crowding through his brain that he made no attempt to unravel them, so he put everything off to another day. Kalloméitsef had been present at dinner, and never had he shown more self-sufficiency, more aristocratic contempt; but his impertinent speeches had no effect on Nejdánof; he did not notice them. He was surrounded by a kind of cloud; it hung like a semi-transparent veil between him and the rest of the world, and strange to say through this veil he saw but three faces; all three were women's faces, and all three kept their eyes obstinately on him. They were Sipiágina, Mashúrina, and Mariánna. What did it mean? and why these

three faces and no others? What had they in common? and what did they want with him?

He went to bed early, but could not sleep. The thoughts which visited him were not melancholy, but solemn—thoughts of the inevitable end—of death. He knew them well. Long did he turn them over one way and another, sometimes shuddering at the probability of annihilation, sometimes welcoming it, almost rejoicing in it. At length he felt a particular inspiration which he knew. He rose, sat down before his writing-table, and with little thought, almost without a correction, wrote the following verses in the book which he kept so carefully concealed :—

“My dear friend, when I die here are my commands. Heap together all my writings, and destroy them that same hour. Surround me with flowers, let the sun into the room; behind the open doors let musicians play. Forbid them the mournful dirge; let the giddy waltz resound under the stroke of the bow, as in the hour of feasting. Drinking in the dying strains with my weakening ear I too will die, will sleep, and without having disturbed the peace before death with useless groans, I will go to another world, rocked by the joyous sounds of the joyous pleasures of this earth.”

As he wrote the word “friend” he was thinking of Sílin. He read his own verses to himself half aloud, and was astonished at what had flowed from his pen. How did this scepticism, this indifference, this frivolous infidelity agree with his principles, with all that he had said at Markélof’s. He threw the book into the drawer of the table, and went back to his bed, but he found no sleep till morning, when the larks were beginning to sing in the grey sky.

The next day, as he was sitting in the billiard-room, after finishing his lesson, Sipiágina came in, glanced round, and going up to him with a smile asked him to come into her sitting-room. She had on a

light barège dress, very plain and very pretty ; the sleeves, trimmed with ruches, only came down to her elbows, a broad ribbon encircled her waist, and her hair fell on her neck in thick curls. Her whole manner expressed welcome, and cautious but encouraging kindness, from the gentle gleam of her half-closed eyes to her languid and soft voice, her movements, her very walk. Nejdánof followed her into the sitting-room, a secluded, pretty room, the air of which was impregnated with the odour of flowers and scents, and spoke of the cleanly freshness of a woman's attire, of the constant presence of a woman. She made him sit down in an armchair, took a seat by his side, and began to ask him about his journey, about Markélof's way of living ; and all so discreetly, so affectionately, so nicely. She spoke of her sincere interest in the welfare of her brother, whose name up to that time Nejdánof had never heard her utter ; from some of her words he gathered that the feeling with which Mariánna had inspired Markélof had not escaped her notice ; and there was a tinge of sorrow in her voice, but whether it was because he had not met with sympathy from Mariánna, or because his choice had fallen on a girl who had really nothing in common with him, Nejdánof could not tell. The main point was that she was evidently trying to tame Nejdánof, to awake confidence in him, to break through his reserve. She even reproached him gently for having a false opinion of her.

Nejdánof listened and listened, looking at her hands and shoulders, and occasionally throwing a glance at her red lips and gently waving curls. At first he answered very briefly ; he felt as it were a sense of oppression in his throat and chest, but little by little this feeling gave way to another, just as disquieting, but not devoid of a certain pleasure. He had never expected that such a great lady, so handsome, so

aristocratic, would deign to take an interest in him, a plain student; and she not only took an interest in him; she really seemed to coquet a little with him.

Nejdánof asked himself why she did all this, but found no answer, and, to tell the truth, wanted none. Sipiágina spoke of Kólia; she even assured Nejdánof that the reason she wished to become intimate with him was that she might speak seriously to him about her son, and generally that she might learn his ideas on the education of Russian children. The suddenness with which this wish had seized her might seem somewhat strange, but the important fact was not what Valentína Mikháilovna was talking about, but that a certain wave of emotion had come over her; she had felt the desire to subdue, to bend to her feet this stubborn neck

Here we must retrace our steps awhile.

Valentína Mikháilovna was the daughter of a very stupid and incapable general with only one decoration and a clasp for fifty years' service—and of an extremely clever and cunning Little-Russian, who, like many of her countrywomen, possessed a most simple and even stupid countenance, the advantages of which she thoroughly understood. Her parents were not wealthy, yet Valentína Mikháilovna managed to enter the Smolny convent,* where, though she was considered a republican, she nevertheless enjoyed favour, as she behaved admirably and worked diligently. When she came out she settled with her mother (her father, the general with the star and the clasp, was already dead, her brother had gone into the country) in a clean but very cold lodging; when visitors talked, one could see the breath coming out of their mouths; Valentína Mikháilovna used laughingly to say that it was like being in church. She bore all the miseries of her comfortless and poor life

* A famous educational establishment near Petersburg.

with bravery, for she was very even-tempered. With the help of her mother she managed to keep up acquaintances and connexions, and to make new ones ; every one, even in the highest circles, spoke of her as a pleasant, well-educated girl, and very well behaved. She had several suitors ; she chose Sipiágin, and made him fall in love with her easily, quickly, and cleverly. Besides which, he soon understood that he could not find a more suitable wife. She was clever and not bad-hearted, nay rather good-natured, but at bottom cold and indifferent ; nor could she imagine that any one could be indifferent to her. She was full of that grace which is peculiar to charming egoists. There is no poetry in it, no true feeling ; but there is gentleness, there is sympathy, there is even affection. Only one must not cross these same charming egoists ; they love power and cannot bear that others should be independent. Women like Sipiágina excite and agitate passionate and inexperienced men ; for themselves they love a regular and quiet life. Virtue comes naturally to them, for they are not easily moved, but the continual wish to command, to attract and to please, gives them life and brilliancy ; their will is firm, and their very influence partly depends on that firmness. It is difficult for a man to resist when sparks of a secret flame flit as it were involuntarily over such a bright pure being ; he waits and waits for the hour when the ice shall melt, but the sunbeams only play on the clear surface,—it never melts, and its clearness is never troubled !

Her coquetry cost Sipiágina but little ; she knew very well that for her there was and could be no danger. While how sweet it was to her soul to make eyes grow dim or sparkle, to make cheeks glow with fear and passion, a voice tremble and break, to disturb the peace of a mind ! How delightful it was in the evening, as she laid herself down on her white

bed for a dreamless sleep, to remember all those excited words and looks and sighs! With what a satisfied smile she then wrapped herself in the consciousness of her safety, of her pre-eminence, and graciously surrendered herself to the lawful caresses of her well-bred husband! It was so pleasant that at times her heart grew quite soft, and she was ready to do some good deed to help her neighbour. She once founded a small hospital, after a certain secretary of legation, madly in love with her, had tried to cut his throat! She prayed for him sincerely, though from her earliest childhood religious feeling had been but weak in her.

So she conversed with Nejdánof, and in every way endeavoured to bring him to her feet. She allowed him to be friendly, she even unveiled her mind a little before him; and she looked on with gracious curiosity, with a half-maternal pleasure, as this interesting and sulky radical, with his good looks, came slowly and awkwardly towards her. A day, an hour, a minute later, and all would be gone, without leaving a trace; but meanwhile she felt it pleasant, was a little inclined to laugh, a little frightened, and even a little melancholy. Forgetting his birth, and knowing how such an attention is valued by solitary and shy people, Valentína Mikháilovna began to ask Nejdánof about his youth, about his family. . . . But guessing instantly, by his confused and abrupt answers, that she had made a wrong move, she endeavoured to efface her mistake, and expanded even a little more before him. . . . as a rose in full blossom opens its sweet petals in the warmth of a summer's day, soon to be folded and closed by the refreshing coolness of night.

However, she did not quite succeed in undoing her mistake. Nejdánof had been touched on a sore place, and could not trust as before. That bitter feeling which he always had, always carried about in the

depths of his soul, again stirred within him ; the reproachful suspicions of the democrat awoke. "It was not for this that I came here," he thought, and remembered Páklin's satirical warnings. Then he took advantage of the first pause, rose, bowed abruptly, and went out "very stupidly," as he involuntarily whispered to himself.

His agitation did not escape Valentína Mikháilovna, but, to judge by the smile with which her eyes followed him, she interpreted that agitation favourably to herself.

In the billiard-room Nejdánof found Mariánna. She was standing with her back to the window, not far from the door of the sitting-room, with her arms tightly crossed. Her face was in deep shadow, but her bold eyes looked at Nejdánof so inquiringly, so defiantly, and there was such contempt, such scornful pity expressed on her clenched lips, that he stopped irresolutely.

"Do you wish to say anything to me?" he said almost involuntarily.

Mariánna did not answer at once.

"No," she said, "or, rather, yes, I do; but not now."

"When?"

"Wait a little. Perhaps to-morrow, perhaps never. You see, I hardly know you—what you are really like."

"Yet," began Nejdánof, "I had thought . . . that there was between us . . ."

"And you do not know me at all," interrupted Mariánna. "Well, wait. Perhaps it will be to-morrow. Now I must be going to my—mistress. To-morrow."

Nejdánof took two steps, and then suddenly turned round.

"By the way, Mariánna Vikéntievna, I have been wanting to ask you—will not you let me accompany

you to the school, to see what you are doing there, before it is shut up?"

"Certainly. Only it was not about the school I wished to speak to you."

"About what, then?"

"To-morrow," repeated Mariáanna.

But she did not wait till the morrow, and the conversation between her and Nejdánof took place the same evening, in one of the alleys of lime-trees not far from the terrace.

CHAPTER XIII.

SHE was the first to speak.

"Mr. Nejdánof," she began, hurriedly, "you are quite enchanted, I think, with Valentína Mikháilovna?"

She turned round without waiting for an answer, and went down the alley. He walked by her side.

"What makes you think so?" he asked, after a pause.

"Is it not true? In that case she managed badly to-day. I can fancy what trouble she took in setting her little snares!"

Nejdánof said nothing, but glanced sideways at his strange companion.

"Listen," she said. "I will not be a hypocrite. I do not love Valentína Mikháilovna, and you know it very well. I may seem unjust to you, but first consider . . ."

Her voice failed her. She grew red and excited. In her, agitation always seemed like anger.

"You are probably asking yourself," she began again, "'Why is this young lady telling me all this?'" You probably asked yourself the same question when I spoke to you about Mr. Markélof."

She stopped suddenly, picked a small mushroom, broke it in twain, and flung it away.

"You are mistaken, Mariáanna Vikéntievna," answered Nejdánof; "on the contrary, I thought I inspired you with confidence, and that thought gave me pleasure."

Nejdánof spoke only half the truth; that idea has but just entered his head.

Mariáanna glanced quickly at him. Up to that time she had kept her face turned away.

"I cannot say that you have inspired me with confidence," she said, as if in thought; "you see, you are quite a stranger to me. But your position and mine are very similar: we are equally unhappy; that is the link between us."

"You are unhappy?" asked Nejdánof.

"Are you not?" said Mariáanna.

He did not answer.

"You know my story," she said impetuously, "the story of my father; his punishment. No? Well, let me tell you that he was tried, found guilty, deprived of his rank—of everything, and sent to Siberia. Then he died, and my mother, she too died. My uncle, Sipágin, my mother's brother, took charge of me; I live on his bread—he is my benefactor, and she, Valentína Mikháilovna, is my benefactress, and I repay them by black ingratitude, because I suppose my heart is hard, and strangers' bread is bitter, and I know not how to bear insulting condescension, and cannot endure protection, and cannot hide my feelings, and when I am continually pricked with pins I only refrain from crying out because I am too proud."

As she uttered these broken phrases, she walked faster and faster.

Suddenly she stopped.

"Do you know that my aunt, merely to get rid of me, is trying to marry me to that horrible Kalloméitsef? Yet she knows my opinions—in her eyes I am a Nihilist; and he!—of course I do not please him; I

am not pretty, but I can be sold. You see that too would be an act of kindness."

"Then why . . ." began Nejdánof, and stopped.

Mariánna again glanced at him.

"Then why did I not accept Mr. Markélof's proposition, you were going to ask? Were you not? True; but what could I do? He is a good man; but I cannot help it—I do not love him."

Mariánna again hurried her steps, as if she wished to save her companion from the necessity of answering her unexpected confession.

They reached the end of the alley. Mariánna turned sharply into a tiny path, which led through a thick plantation of firs, and went along it. Nejdánof followed her. He felt doubly perplexed; it seemed strange to him that that wild girl should suddenly be so frank with him, and he wondered still more that he felt no astonishment at that same frankness, but thought it natural.

Suddenly Mariánna turned round, and stood still in the centre of the path, so that her face was only a couple of feet from Nejdánof's, and looked him straight in the eyes.

"Alexéi Dmítritch," she said, "do not imagine that my aunt is wicked. No, she is all—a lie; she is an actress, she poses; she insists on being admired by all as a beauty, and worshipped by all as a saint! She invents some epigrammatic sentimentality, and says it to one person, then repeats it to another, to a third, and all with the same air as if she had just invented the epigram; and then she uses her beautiful eyes. She knows herself well—knows that she is like a Madonna, and that she cares for no one. She pretends to be always occupied with Kólia, and in reality does nothing but talk about him to clever people. She wishes no evil to any one—not she—she is all goodwill. But all the bones in your body may

be broken in her presence, and it is all the same to her. She will not move a finger to save you ; but if she gains anything by it, or thinks it to her advantage, then . . . oh, then !”

Mariánna was silent. The gall seemed to choke her ; she had determined to give it vent ; she could not restrain herself, yet her voice failed her. She belonged to that unhappy class of people (they have increased in Russia of late) whom justice satisfies without pleasing, while injustice, to which they are very sensitive, stirs them to the depth of their soul. While she was speaking, Nejdánof looked attentively at her ; her flushed face, with the short hair slightly disordered, with the thin lips quivering, seemed to him threatening and full of meaning—and handsome. A ray of sunlight, broken by the thick shield of foliage, lay in a golden patch across her brow ; and that beam of light suited the excited expression of her whole face, the wide, motionless and brilliant eyes, the burning tones of her voice.

“Tell me,” at length said Nejdánof, “why did you call me unhappy ? Do you know my past ?”

She nodded “yes.”

“That is, what do you know ? Has any one spoken to you about me ?”

“I know—your birth.”

“You know it—who told you ?”

“Why she, of course, always the same Valentína Mikháilovna, with whom you are so enchanted. She did not forget to mention—a mere hint, but plain enough—not pityingly, but as a liberal who was above all prejudices, that there was such a remarkable fact in the history of the new teacher ! Do not be astonished, please ; Valentína Mikháilovna remarks to almost every visitor, also as a mere hint, but this time with pity, that there is in the life of her niece such a—remarkable fact ; her father was sent to

Siberia for taking bribes! However much of an aristocrat she may think herself, she is simply a scandalmonger and an actress—that Raphael's Madonna of yours!"

"One moment," said Nejdánof. "Why do you call her 'mine'?"

Mariánna turned away, and walked on down the path.

"You had such a long conversation with her!" she said, in a hollow voice.

"I hardly uttered a word," said Nejdánof; "it was she who talked the whole time."

Mariánna walked on in silence. The path here turned; they passed beyond the fir-trees, and before them lay a little glade with a venerable weeping birch in the centre, round the trunk of which ran a bench. On this bench Mariánna sat down, and Nejdánof took his place by her side. Over their heads waved slowly the long streamers of hanging branches, covered with their young green leaves. The turf around was white with lily of the valley, and the fresh scent of the young grass rose from the whole glade, and relieved their lungs oppressed by the strong exhalations of the firs.

"You want to accompany me to our school," began Mariánna. "Very well, we can go. Only, I am not sure You will not be pleased. You have heard that our chief teacher is the deacon. He is a good man, but you cannot imagine what strange things he tells his pupils. Amongst these there is a boy—his name is Garaséi—he is an orphan of nine, and is the best scholar of all: only fancy!"

Mariánna, in changing the subject of conversation, seemed herself to change; she again became pale and quiet, and her face expressed confusion, as if she were ashamed of all she had said. She evidently wished to draw Nejdánof on to some "question"—education,

the peasantry—no matter what, so long as she did not continue in her former tone. But he was not thinking of “questions” at that moment.

“Mariánna Vikéntievna,” he began, “I will tell you frankly, I never expected all . . . all that has passed between us.” (At the word “passed” she drew slightly away from him.) “It seems to me that we have suddenly become very friendly ; and so it should be. We have long been drawing nearer ; only a word was wanting. So I will speak to you without reserve. You find your life heavy and burdensome in this house ; but your uncle, though he may be narrow, is yet, as far as I can judge, a kindly man. Does he not understand your position, take your side ?”

“My uncle ? First, he is not a man ; he is an official—a senator or minister, or something of the kind. Secondly, I do not wish to complain and gossip without reason ; my life is *not* heavy and burdensome here, that is to say, I am not persecuted, and my aunt’s little needle stabs are really nothing to me. I am quite free.”

Nejdánof looked at Mariánna in astonishment.

“But in that case, all that you have just told me . . .”

“You are free to laugh at me,” she interrupted, “but if I am unhappy it is not for myself. I sometimes think I suffer for all the poor miserable oppressed people in our country ; no, not suffer, but am angry, agitated ; that I am ready to lay down my life for them. I am unhappy that I am a young lady, a hanger-on, and can do nothing and know nothing. When my father was in Siberia, and my mother and I remained in Moscow, oh, how I yearned for him ! Not that I loved him or respected him overmuch, but I wanted so much to try myself, to see with my own eyes, how the exiles, the persecuted, live . . . And how angry I was with myself and with all who were quiet and

comfortable and well fed! And then when he came back, broken down, worn out, and began to lower himself, to push and to toady, oh, how hard it was! How well he did to die, and mother too! But I have remained alive. What for? To feel that my nature is evil, that I am ungrateful, that no one can get on with me, and that I can do nothing—nothing for any one or anything!”

Mariánna looked away and her hand fell on the bench. Nejdánof felt very sorry for her; he touched the hand as it hung, but Mariánna at once drew it away; not that Nejdánof's movement seemed to her out of place, but that he might not for a moment think that she was begging for sympathy.

Through the branches of the firs they caught a glimpse of a woman's dress.

Mariánna sat up. “Look, your Madonna has sent out her spy. That maid has orders to look after me, and see where I go, and with whom! My aunt probably guessed that I was with you, and thought it was improper, especially after the sentimental comedy she had been playing for your benefit. Besides which it really is time to return. Let us go.”

She arose; Nejdánof also stood up. She looked at him over her shoulder, and all at once there passed across her face a pretty, almost childish, expression, slightly confused.

“You are not angry with me, are you? You do not think that I too have been acting? No, you do not think that,” she said before Nejdánof had time to answer. “You too are like me, unhappy; and your nature is bad, like mine. And to-morrow we will go to the school together; for now we are good friends, are we not?”

As they approached the house, Valentína Mikháilovna looked down at them through a glass from the verandah, and slightly shook her head with her usual

gentle smile. Then she turned round, and walking through the open glass door into the drawing-room, where Sipiágin was already sitting at *préférence* with the toothless neighbour who had come in for a cup of tea, she said in a loud measured voice, pronouncing each syllable distinctly,—

“How damp the air is! How very imprudent!”

Mariánna looked quickly at Nejdánof, while Sipiágin, who had that moment utterly defeated his adversary, threw a truly ministerial glance sideways and upwards at his wife without moving his head, and then turned the same sleepily cold yet keen look on the young pair who were coming in from the garden.

CHAPTER XIV.

ANOTHER fortnight passed during which everything flowed on in its usual course. Sipiágin settled the employment of each day with his usual lofty, affable, and rather contemptuous manner, and if his air in so doing was not quite that of a minister, it might at least have belonged to an under-secretary of state. Kólia took his lessons; Anna Zakhárovna had the same perpetual look of persecuted sullenness; guests appeared, talked, played at cards, and apparently did not find it dull; Valentína Mikháilovna continued her by-play with Nejdánof, though her graciousness was now mingled with a slight dash of good-natured irony; Nejdánof became firm friends with Mariáanna, and found to his astonishment that her temper was fairly even, and that it was possible to speak to her on any subject without running the risk of angry contradiction. In her company he twice visited the school, but the first visit was sufficient to show him that there was nothing to be done there. The deacon had entire sway over it, with Sipiágin's permission, in fact by his distinct wish. The deacon taught the elements moderately well, though in an old-fashioned way; but at the examinations he asked extraordinary questions, for instance he once asked Garaséi how he explained the expression, "dark water in the firma-

ment," whereon Garaséi, by the deacon's own instruction, had to answer, "This is inexplicable." Besides which the school was soon closed till the autumn on account of the field-work. Nejdánof, remembering the recommendation of Páklin and others, endeavoured to gain the confidence of the peasants; but he soon found out that he was simply studying them, as far as his powers of observation extended, and was doing nothing for the propaganda. He had lived nearly all his life in towns, and between him and the country people there was a gulf or rather an expanse across which he could not spring. He interchanged a few words with Kírrill the drunkard, and Mendeléi the "windbag," but, strange to say, he felt timid before them, and, except for a few words of coarse and ordinary discontent, he got nothing out of them. Another peasant of the name of Thitúief, simply puzzled him completely; the fellow had a most energetic face, almost brigand-like. "Well," thought Nejdánof, "this man at least can be trusted." And what was really the case? This same Thitúief turned out to be a mere vagabond; the commune of his village had taken away his land, because, though a healthy and even a strong man, he *could not* work. "I can't," sobbed Thitúief, with a deep groan from within and a long sigh. "I can't work; kill me for it if you like! I would sooner make away with myself!" And ended by asking for alms—a halfpenny for a bit of bread. And from his face he might have been a Rinaldo Rinaldini. With the workmen, too, Nejdánof could not get on at all; they were all either terribly dissipated or terribly sullen, and nothing came of his endeavours in that direction. About all this he wrote a long letter to his friend Sílin, in which he complained bitterly of his clumsiness, and attributed it to his bad education and his abominable æsthetic nature. He then suddenly imagined that his calling in the work

of propaganda was to act not by the vivid, spoken word, but by his pen; but the pamphlets which he tried did not succeed. Everything that he endeavoured to put down on paper gave him the impression of being false—strained and unnatural in tone and language, and twice, oh horror! he unwittingly found himself writing verse and his own personal, sceptical feelings. He even determined (and it was a great sign of confidence and friendship) to speak of his failure to Mariánna, and—again to his astonishment—he found sympathy in her, not of course for his versifying, but for the mental suffering which he underwent, and which was not unknown to her. Mariánna attacked “æsthetics” as much as he did, but in truth her real reason for not loving and marrying Markéló was that he had not a trace of those very “æsthetics.” Mariánna of course did not dare acknowledge this even to herself; but that only is strong within us which is for ourselves but a half-suspected secret.

So the days passed, heavily and unevenly, but without actual dullness.

A curious change was going on in Nejdánof. He was dissatisfied with himself, with his work, or rather his inactivity; his words were always full of bitterness and keen self-reproach, but in his soul, somewhere very far away within, he was not uncomfortable; he even felt that he was calming down. Was it a consequence of the country quiet, of the air, the summer, the good food, the comfortable life; or was it that for the first time since his birth he was enjoying the pleasure of intercourse with the mind of a woman? It would be difficult to say, but his mind was really lighter, though he complained, and complained without affectation, to his friend Sílin.

However, this state of mind was suddenly and violently broken up in one day.

On the morning of that day he received a letter

from Vasíli Nikoláevitch, in which he, together with Markélof, was ordered—in expectation of further instructions—immediately to make the acquaintance of and to concert with Solómin, whom we have mentioned, and a certain merchant Golóushkin, an Old Believer,* living in the town of S. This letter agitated Nejdánof; he read in it a reproach for his want of zeal. The bitterness which had hitherto found its vent only in words, now rose once more from the depths of his heart.

At dinner-time appeared Kalloméitsef, excited and furious. “Just imagine,” he cried out, almost in tears, “what horrors I have this moment read in the paper; my friend, my good Mikháil, the Prince of Servia, has been murdered in Belgrade by a set of scoundrels. What will those Jacobins and Republicans not do next, if a firm barrier be not at last opposed to them!” Sipiágin “ventured to remark” that this horrible murder was probably committed not by Jacobins, “whose existence in Servia is not ascertained,” but by partisans of the faction of Karageórgévitch, the enemies of the Obrénovitch. But Kalloméitsef would listen to nothing, and again began in the same plaintive voice to recount how the late prince had loved him, and what a gun he had given him. At length, warming and getting still more excited, Kalloméitsef passed from Jacobins abroad to Nihilists and Socialists at home, and ended by breaking out into an absolute philippic. Taking a large piece of white bread in both hands, and breaking it in the fashionable manner over his plate of soup, as real Parisians do at the Café Riche, he expressed his longing to break and pulverize all who opposed—anything or any one! That was his very expression. “It is time, it is time,” he said, as he lifted his spoon to his mouth; “it is time, it is time,” he repeated, as he raised his glass to the servant who was handing

* Dissenter from the Orthodox Church.

the sherry. He alluded with respect to the great journalists of Moscow, and Ladislav, *notre bon et cher Ladislav*, was never off his tongue. And all this time he was glaring at Nejdánof, as if attacking him. "There's one for you; take that! that is for you; there's another!" Nejdánof at length lost his temper and began to argue in a voice which was hoarse and slightly tremulous (not of course from any timidity); to defend the aspirations, the principles, the ideals of the young generation. Kalloméitsef at once raised his voice, for indignation in him was always expressed by a falsetto, and began to be rude. Sipiágin grandiloquently took Nejdánof's part, Valentína Mikháilovna agreed with her husband; Anna Zakhárovna tried to divert Kólia's attention, and shot furious glances in all directions from under her cap; Mariánna sat like a statue.

But suddenly, on hearing the name of Ladislav for the twentieth time, Nejdánof exploded, and, striking his hand on the table, exclaimed, "There's an authority for you! As if we didn't know who your Ladislav was! A born hireling, and nothing more!"

"A a a what's that!" shrieked Kalloméitsef, choking with wrath. "Is that how you dare to express yourself about a man who enjoys the respect of such personages as Count Blásenkrampf and Prince Kovrjkin?"

Nejdánof shrugged his shoulders. "A good recommendation indeed! Prince Kovrjkin, that servile enthusiast"

"Ladislav is my friend," shouted Kalloméitsef, "he is my companion, and I"

"So much the worse for you," interrupted Nejdánof; "that means that you share his ideas, and my words therefore apply to you as well."

Kalloméitsef grew speechless with anger. "How! What! How dare you! You ought at once"

"What would you be pleased to do to me at once?" repeated Nejdánof, with ironical politeness.

Heaven knows how the skirmish between these two enemies would have ended if Sipiágin had not interrupted it at the commencement. He raised his voice and assumed an attitude in which it was difficult to say what predominated, the importance of the statesman or the dignity of the master of the house; then announced quietly, but firmly, that he did not wish any longer to hear such violent recriminations at his table, that he had long laid it down as a rule (he corrected himself, as a sacred rule) to respect every kind of conviction, but only on condition (here he raised his first finger, which was adorned by a signet-ring) that they kept within the recognized limits of gentlemanly feeling and propriety; that if on the one side he could not but blame in Mr. Nejdánof a certain incontinence of language, which however was excused by his youth, yet on the other hand he could not approve of the violence with which Mr. Kalloméitsef had attacked thinkers in the other camp, a violence which however was explained by his zeal for the common good. "Under my roof," he concluded, "under the roof of the Sipiágin, there are neither Jacobins nor hirelings, there are only conscientious people, who, making allowance for each other's feelings, will certainly close their dispute by shaking hands!"

Nejdánof and Kalloméitsef both remained silent, but did not shake hands; apparently the hour for mutual understanding had not yet struck. On the contrary, they had never yet felt their hatred so intense. The dinner finished in unpleasant and awkward silence. Sipiágin endeavoured to tell a diplomatic story, but dropped it in the middle. Mariánna looked steadily at her plate. She did not wish to show the sympathy which had been awakened in her by Nejdánof's words, not from cowardice, cer-

tainly, but because it was above all necessary not to betray herself to Sipiágina, whose steady, piercing gaze she felt fixed upon her. And in truth Sipiágina never took her eyes off either Mariánna or Nejdánof. His unexpected outburst at first astonished the clever lady, and then something seemed to flash across her, so that she involuntarily whispered, Ah! She had suddenly guessed that Nejdánof, that same Nejdánof who not long since was coming at her call, had now turned away from her. Something had happened. Could it be Mariánna? It must be. She is in love with him, and he

"I must take precautions," she concluded her reflections. In the mean time Kalloméitsef was still panting with wrath. Even two hours after, while playing at *préférence*, he uttered the words "pass" or "buy" with a grieved spirit, and the deep quiver of the injured soul was heard in his voice, though he pretended to be "above it all." Sipiágin alone was well satisfied with the scene. He had had a chance of showing off the power of his eloquence, of quelling a rising storm He knew Latin, and Virgil's *Quos ego* was familiar to him. He did not consciously compare himself to Neptune, but somehow thought of him with complacent fellow-feeling.

CHAPTER XV.

AS soon as possible Nejdánof went to his room and locked himself in. He wished to see nobody—nobody but Mariánna.

Her room was at the very end of a long passage which intersected the whole of the upper floor. Nejdánof had only been in it once, and then but for a few moments ; but he thought that she would not be angry if he knocked—he thought that she might even be glad to speak to him.

It was already late—about ten o'clock. The Sipiágins, after the scene at dinner, had thought it better to leave him alone, and had continued to play cards with Kalloméitsef. Valentína Mikháilovna had asked twice after Mariánna, who had also disappeared soon after dinner.

“Where is Mariánna Vikéntievna ?” she said, first in Russian then in French, addressing herself not to any one in particular, but rather to the walls, as people do when they are very much astonished. However, she soon became interested in her game.

Nejdánof paced a few times up and down his room, then walked down the corridor to Mariánna's door and knocked gently. There was no answer. He knocked again, then tried the door ; it was locked. He re-

turned to his room, but before he could sit down his own door creaked slightly, and he heard Mariánna's voice.

"Alexéi Dmítritch, was it *you* knocked at my door?"

He sprang up at once and hurried to the door. Mariánna was standing in the passage, with a candle in her hand, pale and motionless.

"Yes, it was I," he whispered.

"Come with me," she answered, and walked along the corridor; but before reaching the end she stopped and pushed open a low door. Nejdánof saw a small room, almost empty. "We had better go in here, Alexéi Dmítritch; here we shall not be disturbed." Nejdánof obeyed. Mariánna put down the candle on the window-sill and turned towards him. "I understand," she said, "why you wished to see me particularly—you find life unbearable in this house, and so do I."

"Yes, I wished to see you, Mariánna Vikéntievna; but I do not find my life unbearable since I have become friendly with you."

Mariánna smiled thoughtfully.

"Thanks, Alexéi Dmítritch; but tell me, you cannot mean to stay here after all that has happened?"

"I should think they would not keep me—that they would send me away," answered Nejdánof.

"But you will not resign of your own accord?"

"I? No."

"Why?"

"You wish to know the truth? Because you are here."

Mariánna cast down her eyes and advanced a little further into the room.

"Besides which," continued Nejdánof, "I am bound to remain here. You as yet know nothing; but I wish—I feel that I ought to tell you everything."

He went up to Mariánna and grasped her hand. She did not draw it away, but only looked him in the face.

"Listen!" he exclaimed, suddenly and impetuously,—"listen!" He remained standing, though a few chairs were scattered about the room, and, still holding Mariánna's hand, began to discourse warmly, excitedly, with an eloquence of which he did not know himself capable. He told her of his plans, his intentions, his reasons for accepting Sipiágin's proposal; of all his ties, his acquaintances, his past, all that he had hitherto concealed and told to no one. He spoke of the letters he had received, of Vasíli Nikoláevitch, of everything, even of Sílin! He spoke hurriedly, without a stammer—without the smallest hesitation, as if he were reproaching himself with not having already initiated Mariánna into all his secrets—as if he were asking her pardon.

She listened to him attentively, even greedily, at first with astonishment; but this feeling soon disappeared. Gratitude, devotion, pride, and determination replaced it in her soul. Her face and eyes glowed; she placed her other hand in Nejdánof's, and her lips opened in admiration. She suddenly became strangely beautiful!

At last he stopped and glanced at her, and then, for the first time, seemed to see that face which was at once so dear and so familiar to him. He heaved a loud, deep sigh.

"How right I was to tell you all this!" he managed to whisper.

"Yes, right . . . right!" she answered, also in a whisper. She imitated him unconsciously, but her voice had really failed her. "You know, then," she continued, "that I am at your disposal, that I, too, wish to be of use to your cause, that I am ready to do all that is needful, that I will go wherever I am

ordered, that I have always, with all my heart, desired the same as you."

She ceased. Another word, and tears of thankfulness would have burst forth. This strong nature all at once became soft as wax. She was devoured by the thirst for action, for self-sacrifice, immediate sacrifice.

Steps were heard outside the door—cautious, light, rapid steps.

Mariánna suddenly drew herself up, pulled away her hands, and entirely changed in a moment. She seemed to grow quite gay. A contemptuous, bold expression flitted across her face.

"I know who is spying on us at this moment," she said, so loud that the echo of each word rang clearly back from the passage. Mrs. Sipiágina is spying, but I do not care one atom."

The noise of the steps ceased.

"Well," said Mariánna, turning to Nejdánof, "what am I to do? How can I help you? Speak—speak quickly! What am I to do?"

"What are you to do?" repeated Nejdánof. "I do not yet know . . . I have received a note from Markélof."

"When?"

"This evening. I must go with him to-morrow to Solómin at the factory.

"Yes, yes. Markélof, too, is a good fellow; he is a true friend."

"As I am?"

Mariánna looked Nejdánof straight in the face.

"No, not as you are."

"How then?"

She suddenly turned away.

"Oh, don't you know what you have become for me, and what I feel at this moment?"

Nejdánof's heart beat fast, and he involuntarily

looked down. This girl who loved him—him, a houseless wanderer—who was entrusting herself to him, was ready to follow him, to accompany him, with one and the same object,—this wonderful girl, Mariánna, at that moment represented to Nejdánof the incarnation of truth and goodness upon the earth, the incarnation of that love of a family, of a sister, of a wife, which he had never known—the incarnation of happiness, fatherland, conflict, and freedom!

He raised his head, and saw those eyes again fixed on him. How that clear, proud glance sank into his soul!

“So,” he began, in an uncertain voice, “to-morrow I go; and when I come back I will tell you all I know, all that has been decided. Henceforth all that I do, all that I think, you shall be the first to know!”

“Oh, my friend!” exclaimed Mariánna, again seizing his hand. “I promise you the same. May I see the letter?”

“Here it is.”

Mariánna skimmed through it, and raised her eyes on him with awe.

“Do they entrust you with such important missions as this?”

He smiled in answer, and put the letter back into his pocket.

“Strange,” he said; “we have made our love clear to each other, we love one another, and yet not a word of love has passed between us!”

“Why should it?” whispered Mariánna, and suddenly threw herself on to his neck, and hid her head on his shoulder . . . They did not even interchange a kiss, it would have seemed mean and somewhat foolish, at least so they both felt, but at once separated, giving each other one more warm grasp of the hand.

Mariánna returned for the candle which she had left on the window-sill of the empty room, and then only did a feeling of doubtful wonder steal over her. She blew it out, and, slipping quickly along the passage in complete darkness, returned to her room, undressed, and lay down still in that darkness which seemed to enwrap her so pleasantly.

CHAPTER XVI.

WHEN Nejdánof awoke the next morning he felt no confusion at the recollection of what had passed the evening before; on the contrary he experienced a pleasant and sober joy, as if he had fulfilled a duty which ought properly to have been fulfilled long since. After asking for permission to be away two days, which Sipiágin granted instantly, but with a severe air, Nejdánof set off to Markélof's. Before starting he contrived to see Mariánna. She, too, seemed to feel no shame or confusion; her look was composed and determined. She was only agitated about what he might hear at Markélof's, and begged him to let her know at once.

"Of course," answered Nejdánof.

"And in truth," he thought, "why should we be agitated? Personal feeling played but a secondary part in bringing us together; but we are united for ever. In the name of the cause? Yes, in the name of the cause!"

He did not suspect how much truth or how much falsehood there was in his thoughts.

He found Markélof in the same fatigued and sullen state of mind. After dining anyhow and off anything, they set off in the tarantas, whose acquaintance we have already made, to the great cotton mill of the

merchant Faléief, where Solómin lived. (As Markélof's horse was still lame, they hired from a peasant a second outside * horse, a colt which had never been in harness before.) Nejdánof's curiosity was aroused ; he greatly wished to make the acquaintance of a man of whom he had lately heard so much. Solómin had been warned, and as soon as the travellers arrived at the gate of the factory and gave their names, they were shown into the unpretentious wing occupied by the "engineer-in-chief." He happened to be at that moment in the main building. While one of the workmen ran for him Nejdánof and Markélof had time to go to the window and glance round. It was evident that the factory was in full work and flourishing ; from all sides came the invigorating sound of incessant activity ; machines puffed and thumped, lathes creaked, wheels hummed, straps flapped, barrows and casks were rolled about, and laden carts drove away, commands rang out, whistles and bells sounded, workmen with their shirts girt up and their hair tied up with a strap, and factory girls in print dresses, ran hurriedly about ; harnessed horses moved from place to place ; everywhere vibrated the strength of a thousand men at its highest pressure. All went on regularly, intelligently, and at full speed. Yet there was no special accuracy or neatness—even tidiness was nowhere to be seen ; on the contrary, one was everywhere struck by the carelessness, the mud, the filth. Here a broken window, there the plaster peeling off, planks tumbling about, a door gaping half open ; a large black pool of water, with a rainbow sheen of stagnation on it, stood in the centre of the main yard ; further away were scattered heaps of bricks ; everywhere were strewn scraps of matting, of boxes, ends of rope ; lean and mangy dogs walked about without even barking ; in

* Horses in Russia are harnessed three abreast, the two outside having no shafts. The Greek *δεξιοσειρός*.

a corner under a fence sat a boy of four years old, with a huge stomach and an unkempt head, all besmudged with soot; there he sat and cried hopelessly, as if all the world had deserted him; by his side a sow, smeared with the same soot, and surrounded by pied porkers, was devouring cabbage-stalks; ragged linen was hanging about on ropes, and what an atmosphere, what a stench everywhere! A real Russian mill, not a French or German manufactory!

Nejdánof turned to Markélof.

"People have told me so much about Solómin's wonderful qualities," he began, "that I confess all this disorder astonishes me; I had not expected it."

"There is no disorder here," said Markélof, sullenly; "this is only Russian untidiness. All the same, the place is worth millions; and he has to accommodate himself to old habits, to the kind of work, and to his employer. You know something of Faléief?"

"Nothing."

"The greatest skinflint in Moscow: a pure bourgeois."

At that moment Solómin came in. Nejdánof was disappointed in him as he had been in the factory. At the first glance Solómin gave one the impression of a Fin, or rather of a Swede. He was tall, fair, thin, but broadly built, his face was long and yellow, his nose short and broad, his eyes very small and greenish, his expression quiet, his lips thick and slightly projecting, his teeth white and also large, and his chin cleft and slightly covered with down. He was dressed as a mechanic, as a stoker. He wore an old pea jacket with gaping pockets, a battered oilcloth cap on his head, a woollen comforter round his neck, and tarred boots. Accompanying him was a man of forty in a simple blouse, with a very mobile gipsy face and sharp black eyes, with which on entering he took in Nejdánof at a glance. Markélof he

already knew. His name was Pável; he was Solómin's factotum.

Solómin went leisurely up to each of the visitors, gave them his hard bony hand without a word, took a sealed packet out of a drawer in the table, and handed it without comment to Pável, who immediately disappeared. Then he stretched himself and coughed, threw off his cap with one movement of his hand, sat down on a painted wooden chair, and, pointing to a similar sofa, said, "Pray sit down."

Markélof introduced Nejdánof to Solómin, who again gave him his hand. Then Markélof began to speak about the "cause," and mentioned Vasíli Nikoláevitch's letter, which Nejdánof gave to Solómin. While he read it, passing his eyes attentively and slowly from one line to another, Nejdánof looked at him. Solómin was sitting by the window; the low sun lit up his sun-burnt face, a little moist with work, and his dusty, fair hair, in which played a multitude of little golden motes. His nostrils rose and fell, and his lips moved while he read as if he were pronouncing every word; he held the letter firmly and high up with both hands. All this, without any particular reason, pleased Nejdánof. Solómin returned him the letter with a smile, and began to listen to Markélof, who spoke for some time.

"I will tell you what," began Solómin, when he had finished, and his voice, which was young and strong, though a little hoarse, also pleased Nejdánof—"it is not very convenient here: let us go to your house; it is only seven versts away. You came in a tarantass?"

"Yes."

"Well, I shall find room. In an hour the work here finishes, and I am free. Then we will have a talk with you, too, are disengaged?" said he, turning to Nejdánof.

"Till the day after to-morrow."

"Capital. We will sleep at his house ; may we, Sergéi Mikháilovitch ?"

"What a question ! Of course you may."

"I shall be ready directly. Only let me tidy myself a little."

"And how are matters going in the factory ?" asked Markélof, significantly.

Solómin looked away.

"We will have a talk," he repeated. "Wait a moment ; I will come directly. I have forgotten something."

He went out. Had it not been for the good impression which he had made on Nejdánof, the latter would perhaps have thought, and might even have asked Markélof, "Is he not failing us ?" But nothing of the sort came into his head.

An hour later, when the noisy crowd of workmen had descended from all the stories of the immense building, pouring out by every door and staircase, the tarantas, containing the three friends, rolled through the gates into the road.

"Vasíli Fedótitch, shall we begin ?" called out Pável, who had accompanied them to the gates.

"Wait a bit," answered Solómin. "That refers to a certain piece of night-work," he explained to his companions.

They arrived at Borziónkovo and supped, rather for the sake of appearances. Then cigars were lighted, and a conversation began, one of those interminable night conversations peculiar to Russians, which perhaps no other nation is capable of conceiving, so long and so curious are they.

Here again, Solómin did not confirm Nejdánof's idea of him. He spoke remarkably little—so little, one might almost say he was completely silent ; but he listened attentively, and if he did utter any opinion or remark

it was weighty, short, and to the point. It turned out that Solómin did not believe in the imminence of a revolution in Russia; but as he did not wish to impose his opinion on others, he avoided hampering them, and looked on, not from afar, but standing by their side. He knew the Petersburg revolutionists well, and to a certain extent sympathized with them, for he was of the people; but he also understood the involuntary hesitation of that same people, without which, however, nothing could be done, and which it would be necessary to train for a long time, and not in the same manner or for the same end as the others were doing. So he remained on one side, not as a cunning turncoat, but like a sensible man, who would ruin neither himself nor others for nothing. But he would listen—why not?—and learn too, if so happened.

Solómin was the only son of a deacon; he had five sisters, all married to priests and deacons, but he himself, with the consent of his father, a sedate and sober man, abandoned the seminary and occupied himself with mathematics, especially mechanics, his particular passion. He entered a factory under an Englishman, who loved him as a son, and gave him the means to go to Manchester, where he lived two years and learned English. He had not long since taken in hand the factory of the Moscow merchant, and though he was strict with his workmen (he had learnt that in England), yet was popular among them. "He is one of us," they said. His father was well pleased with him, called him a "steady lad," and only regretted that he would not marry.

During the evening's conversation at Markélof's, Solómin, as we have said, was silent nearly all the time; but when Markélof began talking about the hopes he had of the artisans, Solómin remarked, laconically as usual, that in Russia artisans were not

what they were abroad, but the quietest folk on earth.

"And the peasants?" said Markélof.

"The peasants? There are a good many hard-fisted ones among them, and will be more every year, and they only know their own advantage; the rest are sheep, lost in darkness."

"Then where must we seek?"

Solómin smiled.

"Seek, and ye shall find."

He was nearly always smiling, but his smile, though candid enough, was not vacant; it was like himself. Nejdánof he treated especially kindly; the young student had aroused interest in him—almost tenderness.

During the conversation Nejdánof suddenly flared up and grew hot. Solómin rose quietly, and, walking across the room with his steady gait, shut the window which was open behind Nejdánof's head.

"You might take cold," he remarked good-naturedly, in answer to the astonished look of the orator.

Nejdánof began to ask him whether he could introduce any socialistic ideas into the factory which he managed, and whether he could arrange matters so as to give the workmen a share in the profits.

"My dear friend," answered Solómin, "we have started a school and a small hospital, and the governor fought the change against like a bear."

Once only Solómin grew really angry, and struck his mighty fist on the table so that everything on it danced, including even a half-hundredweight which was lying by the inkstand. They had told him of some legal injustice—some oppression of a society of workmen.

When Nejdánof and Markélof began to talk about starting, of how to put the plan into action, Solómin

continued to listen with curiosity, almost with respect, but said not a word. Their talk went on till four o'clock. And about what did they not talk? Markélof among other things spoke mysteriously of the untiring traveller Kisliakóf and of his letters, which were becoming more and more interesting; he promised to show Nejdánof some of them, and even to let him take them home, as they were very long and written somewhat indistinctly, besides which they were very learned, and sometimes contained verses,—nothing frivolous of course, but with socialistic tendencies. From Kisliakóf Markélof got on to the army, to aides-de-camp, to Germans, and came at length to his essays on the artillery; Nejdánof spoke of the antagonism between Heine and Boerne, of Proudhon, of realism in art, while Solómin listened, and listened, and smoked on, and, without ceasing to smile, without saying a single witty word, seemed to understand better than either of the others wherein lay the gist of the matter.

Four o'clock struck Nejdánof and Markélof could hardly stand from fatigue, while Solómin never so much as winked! The friends separated, but first agreed that on the morrow they should go to town to visit the dissenting merchant, Goloúshkin, "for the propaganda." Goloúshkin himself was very zealous, and even promised proselytes. Solómin expressed a doubt whether it was worth visiting Goloúshkin, but at length agreed that it was.

CHAPTER XVII.

MARKELOF'S guests were still sleeping when a messenger arrived with a letter for him from his sister, Mrs. Sipiágina. In this letter Valentína Mikháilovna talked about domestic trifles, asked him to return a book he had taken, and added in a postscript a bit of "interesting news": his former flame Mariánna had fallen in love with the tutor Nejdánof, and the tutor with her; and this was no gossip that she was telling him, for she had seen with her own eyes and heard with her own ears. Markélof's face grew black as night, but he did not say a word, ordered the book to be given to the messenger, and seeing Nejdánof coming down stairs wished him good-day as usual; he even gave him the packet of Kisliakóf's letters which he had promised him, but did not remain with him, and went off "on business." Nejdánof returned to his room and glanced over the letters which had been given him. In them the young propagandist spoke everlastingly of himself, of his feverish activity; according to his own account, during the last month he had galloped over eleven districts, had been in nine towns, twenty-seven villages, fifty-three hamlets, one farmhouse, and eight factories; had passed sixteen nights under hayricks, one in a stable, one even in a cowshed (here he remarked parenthetically, with a *nota bene*, that fleas did not bite him), had been in underground dwellings, in workmen's barracks, had

everywhere taught, preached, distributed pamphlets, and collected information on the wing; had written down some of it at once, had learnt the rest by heart, according to the latest method in mnemonics; had written fourteen long letters, twenty-eight short ones, and eighteen notes (four of them in pencil, one in blood, and one in soot and water); and had managed to do all this because he had learnt to arrange his time systematically, according to the systems of Quintin Johnson, Sverlitski, Karelius, and other writers and statisticians. Then he recommenced about himself, his star, how and in what points he had completed Fourier's theory of passions; asserted that he had been the first at length to find "soil" for the seed of the cause, that he would not "pass through the world without making a mark," that he himself wondered how he, a young man of two-and-twenty, had already managed to solve all the problems of life and science, and that he would transform Russia, that he would even stir her up! "*Dixi!!*" he added to the end of the line. This word, *dixi*, occurred very often in Kisliakóf's writings, and was always accompanied by two notes of admiration. In one of the letters there was even a socialistic poem, addressed to a certain girl, and commencing—

"Love not me—but the idea!"

Nejdánof marvelled inwardly not only at the self-conceit of Mr. Kisliakóf, but at the kindly simplicity of Markélof; then thought, "Bother æsthetics! even Kisliakóf may be useful." All three friends met in the parlour for breakfast, but the conversation of the day before was not renewed. None of them wished to talk, but only Solómin seemed to be silent without effort; both Nejdánof and Markélof were inwardly excited.

After breakfast they started for the town; the old

servant, sitting on the steps, followed his master with his usual melancholy gaze.

Golouúhkin, the merchant, whose acquaintance Nejdánof was about to make, was the son of a trader who had grown wealthy by selling groceries—a dissenter of the Theodosian sect. He did not add to his father's money, for he was a glutton, an Epicurean after the Russian fashion, and had no special aptitude for business matters. He was a man of forty, stout and ugly, with little pig's eyes, and pitted with small-pox. He talked very quickly, and his words seemed to tumble over each other; he moved his hands and feet restlessly, laughed at everything, and altogether gave one the impression of being stupid, spoilt, and exceedingly vain. He considered himself an educated man, because he wore European clothes, lived freely though dirtily, and knew rich people; he went to the theatre, and protected exuberant actresses, with whom he conversed in a marvellous tongue which he supposed to be French. His chief passion was a thirst for notoriety. "Let the name of Golouúhkin resound through all lands"; Suvórof and Potémkin were famous, why not Kapitón Golouúhkin? This same passion, overcoming his natural stinginess, threw him, as he said, with a certain satisfaction, into the opposition (he used to say simply "into the position," but had learnt better), and brought him into connexion with the Nihilists; he uttered the most extreme opinions, laughed at his own dissenting faith, ate meat during fast-time, played at cards, and drank champagne like water. He was lucky in everything, "because," he said, "I have all the authorities bribed in proper style; every hole sewn up, every mouth stopped, every ear closed." He was a widower without any children; his nephews fawned on him with obsequious timidity, but he called them uneducated boors and barbarians, and hardly allowed them into

his presence. He lived in a large stone house, rather untidily kept; a few of the rooms had foreign furniture, in others there was nothing but painted chairs and an oil-cloth sofa. There were pictures everywhere, and all execrable; orange landscapes, purple sea-pieces, Moller's "Kiss," and fat naked women with red knees and elbows. Although Goloushkin had no family, a crowd of servants and toadies sheltered themselves under his roof; it was not generosity which prompted him to support them, but the same eagerness for popularity and the need for some one to command and lord it over. "My clients," he called them, when he wanted to throw dust in any one's eyes; for, though he read no books, he had a capital memory for learned terms.

The young men found Goloushkin in his study. Wrapped in a long coat, with a cigar in his mouth, he was pretending to read the paper. On seeing them he sprang up, fidgeted nervously, grew red, called for lunch immediately, asked a question, laughed at something—all in a minute. Markélof and Solómin he knew. Nejdánof was a stranger to him. Hearing that he was a student, he laughed again, shook his hand once more, and said,—

"Capital! capital! An addition to our ranks. Instruction is light; ignorance is darkness. I got my learning by ha'porths, but have common sense, so I have got on."

Nejdánof thought that Goloushkin was frightened and confused, and so he was. "Take care, Kapitón, do not fall into the mud," was his first thought at the sight of every new face. However, he soon came round, and began in the same hurried and confused manner to speak about Vasíli Nikoláevitch, his character, the necessity for pro-pa-gan-da (he knew this word well, but pronounced it slowly); that he, Goloushkin, had discovered a new adherent, a sure

fellow, that the time was near, that things were ripe for . . . for the lancet (here he glanced at Markélof, who did not move an eyebrow) ; then, turning to Nejdánof, he began to praise himself almost as well as the great correspondent Kisliakó himself. He said that he had long since left the ranks of the incapables ; that he perfectly understood the rights of the proletariat (he also remembered that word well) ; that though he had abandoned trade and taken to banking operations to increase his capital, yet it was simply in order that that capital might, at a given minute, serve the common cause—the people, he might say ; but that he, Goloúshkin, in reality despised capital.

Here came in the servant with the lunch, and Goloúshkin, clearing his throat, significantly asked whether the guests would not “take a snack,” and himself was the first to toss down a goodly allowance of peppery whiskey.

The guests set to work at the lunch. Goloúshkin stuffed down enormous lumps of pressed caviar, and drank steadily, saying now and then, “Come on, gentlemen, come on ; a capital glass of mâcon.” Then, turning again to Nejdánof, he asked whence he came, for how long, and where he was living ; and, hearing that he was at Sipiágin’s, exclaimed, “I know the gentleman ; he is of no account.” Then he began to abuse all the landowners of the province, saying that, besides having no sense of the public good, they had even no sense of their own interests. Only, oddly enough, while he was pouring out this abuse, his eyes were restless, and he was evidently uneasy.

Nejdánof could not thoroughly explain to himself what sort of a man he was, or why they needed him. Solómin, as usual, was silent. Markélof looked so sullen that at last Nejdánof asked him what was the matter. Markélof answered, “Nothing,” but in that particular tone in which people generally answer

when they wish to hint that "there is something, but not for you to know."

Goloúshkin again began to abuse some one or other, and then to praise the young generation—what geniuses they were now! what geniuses! Solómin interrupted him by asking who the trustworthy proselyte was of whom he had spoken, and where he had found him? Goloúshkin burst out laughing, and said several times, "You shall see, you shall see!" and began to ask him questions about his factory, about his "scoundrel of a master," all which Solómin answered in monosyllables.

Then Goloúshkin poured out champagne all round, and, bending over to Nejdánof, whispered, "To the Republic!" and drank his at a draught. Nejdánof put his lips to it; Solómin said he did not drink wine in the morning; Markélof drained his glass angrily and determinedly. He was evidently devoured by impatience. "Here we are," his look seemed to say, "all cooling down, and not talking of anything serious." He struck the table with his hand, and said sullenly, "Gentlemen!" as if about to speak.

But at that moment entered a respectable youth, with a foxy face and a consumptive air, in a merchant's nankeen coat, his arms dangling far from his sides. Bowing to everybody, he whispered something to Goloúshkin, who hurriedly answered, "Directly, directly." "Gentlemen," he added, "I must ask you to excuse me. My clerk here, Vásia, has told me of a matter which makes it absolutely necessary for me to absent myself for a time; but I hope, gentlemen, that you will be able to dine with me at three o'clock; we shall be much more at our ease then."

Neither Solómin nor Nejdánof knew what to answer, but Markélof at once said, with the same sullen voice and air,—

"Of course we will ; do you think we are playing a comedy ?"

"I am much obliged," said Golouúshkin, and, stooping, whispered to Markélof, "In any case, I give a thousand roubles to the cause ; do not doubt it !"

And he twice waved his right hand, with the thumb and little finger extended, meaning, "It's sure !"

He saw his visitors to the door, and, as he stood on the threshold, called out,—

"I shall expect you at three !"

"Expect us," answered Markélof, alone.

"Gentlemen," said Solómin, as soon as they got into the street, "I shall take a droshky and go back to the factory. What could we do till dinner-time ? Walk up and down ? And our merchant, I am thinking, is like a goat, good for neither wool nor milk !"

"Wool there will be !" remarked Markélof angrily. "He has promised me money. Or do you despise him ? We can't look into everything. We are not young ladies, to pick and choose lovers."

"Despise him ! not I," answered Solómin, quietly. "I was only wondering whether my presence could be of any use. However," he added, glancing at Nejdánof, and smiling, "I will stay—with pleasure. Even death is fair in company."

Markélof raised his head.

"In the mean time let us go to the public garden : the weather is fine. We will look at the people."

"Come along."

So they set off, Markélof and Solómin leading the way, Nejdánof after them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NEJDANOF'S state of mind was very curious. In the last two days he had undergone so many new experiences, seen so many new faces For the first time in his life he had met a girl with whom, in all probability, he was in love ; he had been present at the very beginning of an enterprise to which, in all probability, he had entirely devoted himself. Well, was he happy? No. Did he hesitate? No. Was he troubled or afraid? Certainly not. Did he at least feel that tension of his whole body, that longing to rush forward to the first ranks of the fighters, which is inspired by the nearness of the struggle? No. Did he then believe in the cause, if in nothing else? Did he believe in his own love? "O vile æstheticism! Sceptic!" whispered his lips silently. Why this fatigue, this disinclination to speak as soon as he was no longer shouting and furious? What internal voice did he try to drown by that same furious zeal? But Mariánna, that brave, true companion, that pure, passionate soul, that peerless girl, did she not love him? Was not his good fortune great to have met her, to have won her friendship, her love? And those two men who are walking in front of him, Markélof and that Solómin, whom he at present knows little, but to whom he feels so instinctively drawn, are they not

excellent specimens of Russian life, Russian thought ; and is not their acquaintance, their friendship, also to be called good fortune ? Then why this doubtful, vague, annoying feeling ? Why and wherefore this sorrow ? “ If you are visionary and melancholy, what business have you with revolutions ? ” he again whispered to himself. “ Go on writing verses and growing sour, and wrap yourself in your own little thoughts and feelings, burrow in a mass of psychological reflections and refinements, but do not consider your sickly, nervous irritation and caprices as the manly indignation, the honest anger, of a man convinced of the truth of his cause ! Oh Hamlet ! Hamlet ! Prince of Denmark ! How to escape from thy shadow ? How to escape imitating thee in everything, even in the miserable satisfaction of self-depreciation ? ”

“ Alexéi, my friend, thou Russian Hamlet ! ” resounded suddenly a shrill and well-known voice, as if echoing his own thoughts, “ is it thee I behold ? ”

Nejdánof raised his eyes, and beheld with amazement Páklin—Páklin as a shepherd, dressed in a light-coloured summer suit, without a necktie, with a large straw hat encircled by a blue ribbon resting on the back of his head, and in varnished shoes !

He limped up to Nejdánof and shook his hand.

“ To begin with,” he said, “ though we are in a public garden, we must embrace according to the old fashion. Once, twice, and thrice ! Secondly, be it known to you that, if I had not met you here to-day, you would nevertheless infallibly have seen me to-morrow, for I know where you live, and in fact came here on purpose ; how, I will tell you later. Thirdly, introduce me to your friends, tell me briefly who they are, them, who I am, and then let us enjoy life ! ”

Nejdánof fulfilled his friend’s wish, named him, Solómin and Márkélof, and said of each of them who he was, where he lived, what he did, &c.

“Excellent,” exclaimed Páklin; “now let me carry you away far from the crowd, which, by the way, doesn’t exist, to a secluded bench, where I occasionally sit, in the hours of meditation, and enjoy nature. A wonderful view there is from it—the governor’s house, two striped sentry-boxes, three gendarmes, and not a single dog! Please do not be too much astonished at the discourses with which I try to enliven you! According to my friends I represent Russian wit; that is probably the reason why I am lame!”

Páklin led his friends to the “secluded bench,” and made them sit down, having as a preliminary driven off two beggars. Then the young men “exchanged ideas,” an occupation which is somewhat dull, especially at first, and remarkably unprofitable.

“Stop,” suddenly exclaimed Páklin, turning to Nejdánof; “I must explain to you how I happen to be here. You know, every summer I take my sister somewhere. When I heard that you were starting for the neighbourhood of this town, I remembered that I had living here a couple of relations on my mother’s side—marvellous creatures. My father was a small tradesman” (Nejdánof knew this, but Páklin said it for the benefit of “the others”), “and she was a noble; and for a long time they have been asking us to come. Wait a moment, I thought, that will just suit me. They are most excellent people; my sister will be in good hands; what more do we want? So we came as you see; and I can’t say how well we get on here. But what strange creatures! You must certainly make their acquaintance. What are you doing; where do you dine; and what has specially brought you here?”

“We dine to-day with a certain Goloushkin, a merchant here,” answered Nejdánof.

“At what time?”

“At three.”

"Are you visiting him for the . . . for the . . ."
Páklin looked round at Solómin, who was smiling, and Markélof, who was growing blacker and blacker . . . "But tell them, Aliósha—make them some Masonic sign—tell them that they need not stand on ceremony. I am one of yours . . . of your society . . ."

"Golouúshkin too is one of us," remarked Nejdánof.

"Admirable. But you have still plenty of time before three o'clock. Here's an idea; let us go and see my relations."

"But have you gone mad? How can we go in like that? . . ."

"Don't be afraid. I take it all on myself. Just imagine an oasis into which neither literature, nor politics, nor any product of the age ever finds its way. It's a plump little house, such as one does not see nowadays. Its very smell—is antique; the people are antique, the air is antique, the whole thing is antique; Catherine the Second, powder, hoops, the eighteenth century! As for the people, just imagine a husband and wife, both old, very old, of the same age, and without wrinkles, round, fat, and neat, just like a pair of love-birds, and good even to stupidity, to holiness—unimaginably good! You may tell me that unimaginable goodness often exists together with the absence of moral feeling . . . I don't go into those refinements, and only know that my old people are as good as can be. They never had any children. They are saints! So they call them in the town saints. They are dressed just alike, in a kind of striped garment: and the stuff is good too; you won't find anything like it now. They are marvellously alike, except that one wears a cap and the other a bonnet, with lace like the cap, only without the bow. But for that bow you would not know which was which, for the husband, too, has no beard. One is called

Fómoushka and the other Fímoushka. I tell you you ought to pay to be allowed to see them. They love each other to absurdity, and if any one chooses to visit them, he is welcome. And they are very good natured—show all their little tricks at once. Only there is one thing: you must not smoke in their house. Not that they are dissenters, but they do so dislike tobacco. You see, in their time no one smoked. But then they do not keep canaries, because that bird, too, was little known then. And that is a real blessing, too, isn't it? Well, are you coming?"

"I really don't know," began Nejdánof.

"Wait, I haven't told you everything. Their voices are exactly alike; shut your eyes and you won't know which is speaking, only Fómoushka has a shade more expression in his voice perhaps. Well, gentlemen, you are preparing yourselves for a great cause, for a fierce struggle, possibly. How would it be if, before plunging into those wild waves, you took a dip"

"Into stagnant water," broke in Markélof.

"And even if it were? It is stagnant, perhaps, but not putrid. There are ponds like that in the steppe. Though there is no stream through them, they never become slimy, because there are springs at the bottom. And there are springs in my old people—in their hearts, as bright and clear as can be. Do you want to know how people lived a hundred—a hundred and fifty years ago? Then come with me at once. For a day and an hour will come, and it will certainly be the same for both, when my love-birds will fall off their perches, and all this antique fashion will come to an end, and the plump little house will go to ruin, and on its place will grow what, according to my grandmother, always grows where men have been—nettles, wild sorrel, henbane, wormwood, and dock; the street will exist no longer, and people will come and go,

and see nothing like it again till the end of days!"

"Well," said Nejdánof, "seriously, shall we go?"

"I will come with pleasure," said Solómin; "it is not much in my line, but it must be interesting, and if Mr. Páklin can really assure us that we shall disturb no one, why shouldn't we . . ."

"Don't doubt it!" exclaimed Páklin, in turn; "you will be received simply with enthusiasm; we need not stand on ceremony. I tell you, they are saints; we will make them sing. Now, Mr. Markélof, what say you?"

Markélof shrugged his shoulders angrily.

"I can't stay here alone! Go on."

They all rose from the bench.

"What a ferocious gentleman you have there!" whispered Páklin to Nejdánof; "he is just like John the Baptist when he had eaten the locusts—nothing but locusts without any honey! But he," nodding his head towards Solómin, "is a capital fellow. What a pleasant smile he has! I have remarked that only those men smile like that who are superior to others and do not themselves know it."

"Are there such people?" asked Nejdánof.

"Not many, but there are," answered Páklin.

CHAPTER XIX.

FÓMOUSHKA and Fímoushka, or Fomá Lavréntievitch and Evfímia Pávlovna Soubótchef, both belonged to the same class of genuine Russian nobility, and were reckoned about the oldest inhabitants of the town of S. They had married very young, and had settled a very long time ago in the wooden home of their ancestors in the suburbs of the town. They had never left it to travel, and had never made any change in their manner of living or in their habits. It seemed as if, for them, time had stood still; no innovations had ever crossed the boundary of their "oasis."

Their fortune was not great; but their peasants continued to bring them several times a year live stock and provisions, as in the old days of serfdom. At the fixed date the head man of the village appeared with the redemption-money and a brace of riabchiks,* supposed to have been killed in the woods of the "masters"—woods which, in reality, had long since disappeared. The head man received a cup of tea on the threshold of the parlour, a lambskin bonnet, a pair of green leather mittens, and was dismissed with a blessing.

Their house was full of servants, as of old. An ancient serving-man, Kalliópytch, clad in a jacket of

* A species of grouse.

marvellously thick cloth, with an upright collar and tiny steel buttons, still announced, in a sing-song tone, that "dinner was on table," and then dozed off, as he stood behind his mistress's chair. The sideboard was in his hands; he superintended "the various pots, cardamoms, and lemons," and when he was asked whether he had not heard that all the serfs had received their freedom he invariably answered that there was a great deal of nonsense talked in the world, that it was the Turks who had their freedom, and that up to this time, God be thanked, he had escaped it.

They kept a dwarf, Poufka, to amuse them, and at dinner-time Vasilievna, an old nurse, used to come in with a dark handkerchief tied round her head, and tell them all the latest news, in a mumbling voice, about Napoleon the First, the year 1812, antichrist, and the white Arabs; or she would prop her chin on her hand, as if in great grief, and relate what a dream she had had and what it meant, or what the cards had foretold.

Even their house was unlike all the other houses in the town. It was built entirely of oak, and had square windows, out of which the double winter frames were never taken. It possessed all kinds of little rooms and closets and cabinets and cupboards, verandahs with railings and penthouses on neatly turned pillars, and every manner of back entrances and passages. Before it were palings, behind it a garden, and in the garden a mass of little barns, lumber-rooms, store-closets, cellars, ice-houses—a perfect nest! Not that there was over much stored in these various receptacles. Some had even tumbled in; but so it had been built long ago, and so it remained.

They had only two horses, very old, with hollow backs and shaggy coats; one had even grey patches

over it from old age ; it was called the Immovable. They were harnessed, once a month at most, to a marvellous carriage, known to the whole town. It resembled a globe with the front quarter cut away, and was lined with some foreign yellow stuff, covered with little spots looking like warts. The last yard of that stuff must have been woven at Utrecht or Lyons in the reign of the Empress Elizabeth.

And their coachman was a venerable old man, smelling strongly of grease and tar. His beard began just under his eyes, and his eyebrows fell in a small water-fall down to his beard. He was so slow in all his movements that it took him five minutes for a pinch of snuff, two minutes to put his whip inside his belt, and over two hours to harness the Immovable alone ; and his name was *Perfishka*.*

When the *Soubótchefs* were out for a drive, if the road ran the least bit up-hill they became frightened (they were just as frightened, too, if the road ran down-hill), they caught at the straps, and repeated aloud this incantation, "For the horses, the horses, the strength of Samuel ; for us, for us, the lightness of breath, the lightness of down !"

In the town of S. they were considered eccentric, almost mad ; and they themselves knew that their ways were not those of the present day, but cared little. They kept to the fashion in which they had been born, had grown up, and been married. There was only one peculiarity of that same old fashion which they had not preserved—never by any chance did they punish or prosecute a servant. If one of their people turned out a hopeless drunkard or thief, they bore it long and patiently, as people endure bad weather. Then they tried to get rid of him, to pass him on to other masters,—“Let others have their turn a bit !” But it was seldom they had any such trouble

* Diminutive of *Porphz'ri*.

—so seldom that when it happened it formed an epoch in their life, and they used to say, for instance, “Ah, that was long ago; that happened when that rascal Aldóshka was living with us”; or, “That was when grandfather’s fur cap with the fox tail was stolen,” for the Soubótchefs still possessed such caps.

There was also another distinguishing feature of olden days which was missing—neither Fímoushka nor Fómoushka was specially religious. Fómoushka was even rather a follower of Voltaire, and Fímoushka dreaded priests greatly; according to her experience they had the evil eye. “The priest has been sitting here,” she would say; “see, the cream has turned.”

They seldom went to church, and fasted as Catholics do—that is, allowed themselves eggs, butter, and milk. This was known in the town, and of course did not better their reputation. But their goodness overcame everything, and, though people laughed at the eccentricity of the Soubótchefs, and called them innocents and saints, yet in truth every one respected them.

Yes, they were respected, but as for visiting them, no one went near them, which however did not distress them greatly. They were never dull together, and therefore never left each other, nor wished for any other company. Neither of them had ever been ill, and if one of them had by chance some slight ailment, they both drank lime-flower tea, or rubbed their backs with warm oil, or dropped melted grease on to the soles of their feet, which quickly cured their malady. They always passed the day in the same manner. They rose late and drank chocolate out of tiny mortar-like cups—“tea,” they said, “had come in after their time;” then sat opposite one another and either talked—they always found subjects—or read in the ‘Agreeable Book of Pastimes,’ ‘the Mirror of the World,’ or the ‘Aonides,’ or they turned over an old

album, bound in red leather with a gold edging, which had once belonged, as an inscription testified, to *Mme. Barbe de Kabylie*. How and when this album came into their hands they did not know. There were in it a few French and many Russian contributions both in verse and prose; of which the following reflections on "Cécéro" are a fair sample.

"In what disposition of mind Cécéro entered on the office of quæstor, is manifested by him thus: calling the gods to witness the purity of his sentiments in all the offices wherewith he had unto that time been honoured, he reckoned himself bound by the most sacred ties to fulfil them worthily, and, with this intention, he, Cécéro, not only refused himself pleasures which were contrary to the law, but avoided even such amusements as seemed universally indispensable." Underneath ran, "Written in Siberia, in cold and privation." There was also a remarkable piece of verse, headed 'Thyrsis,' in which were strophes such as these: "Calm rules the world; the dew gleams pleasantly, softens and refreshes nature, and gives it a new life. Alone Thyrsis, with down-cast mind, suffers, is tormented and melancholy; when his dear Annette is not with him, nothing will raise his spirits." Also an impromptu by a certain captain on a passing visit, on the 6th of May, 1790:—"Never shall I forget thee, sweet village, and shall ever remember how pleasantly the time slipped away, when I had the honour in the home of thy possessor to spend the best five days of my life in a most respectable circle, amidst a number of ladies and damsels, and other *enteresting* personages!" On the last page, instead of verses, were recipes against stomach-ache, spasms, and, alas! even against worms. The Soubótchefs dined exactly at twelve, and ate nothing but old-fashioned dishes: cheesecakes, soups of giblets and various ma-

terials, porridge, jellies, pasties, chicken with saffron, pancakes and honey. After dinner they slept an hour, not more; when they awoke, they again sat down opposite each other and drank bilberry-water, or a kind of drink called "forty minds," which, however, almost always flew in foam out of the bottle, causing "the masters" much laughter and Kalliópytch much vexation; he had to "wipe up everywhere," and always grumbled for a long time at the house-keeper and the cook, whom he held responsible for the invention of this drink. "What is the good of it?" he said; "only spoils the furniture." Then they either read something more, or laughed at Poufka the dwarf, or sang old romances in duet (their voices were exactly alike, high, weak, rather tremulous and hoarse, especially after sleeping, but not unpleasant), or even played at cards, but here again the games were all old—krébs, la mouche, or boston "sans prendre." Then the tea-urn appeared; for they drank tea in the evening; that concession they had made to the spirit of the age, though they invariably remarked that they were spoiling themselves, and that people were becoming decidedly weaker from the use of that "Chinese herb." However, as a rule they refrained from attacking the present time and praising the past: they had never lived otherwise from their birth; but that other people might live otherwise, and even better, they readily allowed, so long as they were not forced to change. At eight o'clock Kalliópytch brought up the inevitable cold soup for supper, and at nine the great feather beds received into their comfortable embraces the plump little persons of Fómoushka and Fímoushka, and peaceful sleep soon descended on their eyelids. Then all became quiet in the old house; the lamp burnt before the holy image, a scent of musk and mint rose into the air, the cricket chirped, and the good, laughable, innocent couple slept.

It was to these saints,* or, as he called them; love-birds, with whom his sister was living, that Páklin took his companions.

His sister was a clever girl, and her face was far from ugly; her eyes were very fine, but an unhappy deformity crushed her, took away all her gaiety, all her self-reliance, and made her suspicious, almost ill-tempered. Besides which she had an extraordinary name, Snandúlia. Páklin wanted to rechristen her Sópia, but she obstinately clung to her strange name, saying that a humpbacked woman deserved to be called Snandúlia. She was a good musician, and played the piano well. "Thanks to my long fingers," she used to say, with a tinge of bitterness; "deformed people always have long fingers."

The visitors found Fómoushka and Fímoushka at the moment when they had awoke from their siesta, and were drinking their bilberry-water.

"Let us enter the eighteenth century," exclaimed Páklin, as he crossed the threshold of their house.

And the eighteenth century did meet them in the very entrance, in the shape of little blue screens, covered with black silhouettes of powdered ladies and gentlemen. These silhouettes, due to Lavater's hand, were greatly the fashion in Russia in the years 1780—1790. The unexpected appearance of so large a number of visitors—four together—caused a commotion in the house which was so seldom visited. There was a shuffling of both shod and bare feet, women's faces appeared and vanished, some one was shut into a room, there was a groan, an outburst of laughter, and a hurried whisper, "I'll give it you!"

At length appeared Kalliópytch in his jacket, and opening the door of the drawing-room, cried aloud,

* The word used means half a saint, half a fool, "silly," in the old sense. The two things are very closely connected in Russia.

“Sir, this is Sıla Samsónytch with other gentlemen!”

The Soubótchefs were much less disturbed than their servants. They were, it is true, a little alarmed by the irruption of four great fellows into their parlour, which however was fairly large, but Páklin put them at once at their ease by presenting in turn each of the three with his usual jokes, as peaceable folk, and not belonging “to the Crown.”

They could not endure “Crown” people, that is, officials.

Snandúlia, who appeared at her brother’s call, was much more troubled and uneasy than the old people. These latter asked their guests—both at once, and in the same words—to be seated, and inquired what they would take, tea, chocolate, or sparkling water with syrup. But when they found that their visitors would take nothing, having but lately breakfasted with the merchant Golóushkin, and having promised to dine with him, they ceased to press them, and, folding their arms with the same gesture, began the conversation.

At first it languished a little, but soon became more lively. Páklin greatly amused the old people by Gógol’s well-known anecdote, how the church was crammed till the mayor appeared, yet room was found for him; and how a certain pie therefore resembled the mayor. At this they laughed till they cried. Their laughter, too, was exactly alike; it was shrill, and finished with a cough and a general redness of face and perspiration.

Páklin had remarked that quotations from Gógol always have a great effect in sending people like the Soubótchefs into convulsions; but as his object was not so much to amuse them as to draw them out for the benefit of his acquaintances, he changed his tactics, and managed so well that the old people became quite lively.

Fómoushka produced and exhibited to the visitors his favourite carved wooden snuff-box, on which at one time might have been counted thirty-six human figures in various positions. They had all long since disappeared, but Fómoushka still saw them, and could enumerate them and point out each one. "See," he said, "there is one looking out of window; see, he has put his head out." And the place at which his fat little finger with its turned-up nail was pointing was as smooth as the rest of the snuff-box.

Then he called the attention of the visitors to an oil-painting hanging over his head. It portrayed a hunter in profile, mounted on a blue roan, also in profile, and riding at breakneck speed over a snow-covered plain. The hunter had on a tall white sheep-skin cap, with a light blue top, a camel's hair Circassian coat with velvet facings, encircled with a girdle of wrought gold; a glove embroidered with silk was stuck into the girdle, and a dagger, in a silver and black sheath, was attached to it. In one hand the hunter, who was young and plump, held an enormous horn, adorned with bright red tassels; in the other his reins and whip. The horse had all four feet in the air, and on each the artist had carefully painted the shoe, without omitting even the nails.

"And notice," said Fómoushka, pointing with the same fat finger at four semicircular marks painted on the snow behind the horse, "there are the tracks on the snow; he has painted even those!"

Why there were only four marks, and further back not a single one, Fómoushka forgot to mention.

"That is myself," he said, after a pause, with a shamefaced smile.

"Why," exclaimed Nejdánof, "used you to hunt?"

"Yes, but not for long. Once when my horse was galloping at full speed I was thrown over its head and hurt myself in the 'kourpéi.' So Fímoushka was

frightened and made me stop. Since that time I have given it up."

"Where did you hurt yourself?" asked Nejdánof.

"In the 'kourpéi,' repeated Fómoushka, in a lower tone.

The visitors looked at one another in silence. No one knew what a kourpéi was; at least, Markélof knew that the tufted tassel on a Cossack or Circassian bonnet is called a kourpéi, but could it be there that Fómoushka had hurt himself? But no one had the courage to ask him what he meant precisely by the word.

"Well, now you have had your turn at showing yourself off," suddenly exclaimed Fímoushka, "I will sing my own praises a little."

So out of a tiny bonheur-du-jour (as was called an old-fashioned desk on twisted legs, with a curved lid which slid back into the desk when opened) she took a little water-colour miniature in an oval bronze frame; it represented a perfectly naked child of about four, with a quiver behind its back and a light-blue ribbon across its shoulder, trying the sharpness of the arrows on the tips of its fingers. The child was very curly headed, with a smile and a slight squint.

"That is I," she said.

"You?"

"Yes, when I was small. There was a Frenchman who used to come to my father's, an excellent painter. He took this likeness of me for my father's birthday. Such a nice Frenchman! He used to come to our house afterwards. He would come and scrape his foot as he bowed, then shake it a little in the air and kiss one's hands, and when he went away he would kiss his own fingers, he would indeed! And he bowed to the right, to the left, and backwards and forwards! Such a nice Frenchman!"

The visitors praised the painting. Páklin even said that he saw a certain likeness.

Then Fómoushka began to talk about the Frenchmen of the present day, and expressed the opinion that they must all have become very wicked.

"Why so, Fomá Lavréntievitch?"

"Why? why, see what names they have now!"

"For instance?"

"For instance, Nogent-Saint-Laurent, simply a bandit's* name!"

Fómoushka inquired, casually, who was ruling in Paris. He was told "Napoleon," whereupon he seemed astonished, and even grieved.

"What?" he said, "such an old . . ." and suddenly stopped, and looked round doubtfully.

Fómoushka knew but little French, and read Voltaire in a translation (he kept a manuscript of 'Candide' in a private box under his pillow), but he occasionally dropped expressions such as "That, my good sir, is *fausse parquet*," meaning "suspicious," "untrue," which made people laugh greatly, till one day a certain learned Frenchman explained that it was an old Parliamentary expression used in France up to 1789.

As the conversation had turned on France and Frenchmen, Fímoushka mustered up courage to ask for an explanation of a matter which had been weighing on her soul. She at first thought of turning to Markélof, but he did look so very fierce! Solómin she would have asked, but "no!" she thought, "he looks too simple; I should doubt his knowing French." So she fixed upon Nejdánof.

"Excuse me, sir," she began, "I wish you would tell me . . . My relation there, Síla Samsónytch, is always laughing at an old woman like me, and at my ignorance."

* This name bears a ludicrous resemblance to certain Russian words.

"What is it you wish to know?"

"It is this. If any one wants to ask in the French 'dialect' 'What is that?' ought he to say 'Ké se ke sé ke se lá?'"

"Yes."

"And may he also say, 'Ké se ke se lá?'"

"Yes."

"Or simply 'Ké se lá?'"*

"He can."

"And all that means the same thing?"

"Yes."

Fímoushka was silent for a moment, then opened her hands as if accepting defeat.

"Well, Síla," she at length said, "I was wrong, and you were right. Only those French—what queer people they are!"

Páklin then began to beg the old folk to sing something. They both laughed, and wondered at his having such an idea, but soon consented, on condition that Snandúlia should play the accompaniment "she knew of" on the "clavecin." In one corner of the room there was a small piano which none of the visitors had noticed. Snandúlia accordingly sat down to the "clavecin," and struck a few chords. Such sharp, feeble, miserable, toothless sounds Nejdánof had never heard in his life, but the old people started off at score:—

"Is it to find grief,"

began Fómoushka,

"Grief in our love,
That the gods have given us hearts,
Hearts which can love?"

"Is there on earth,"

answered Fímoushka,

* Fímoushka's phonetic renderings of course mean, "Qu'est ce que c'est que cela?" "Qu'est ce que cela?" and "Qu'est cela?"

“ One feeling of passion
Free from ills and troubles ? ”

“ Nowhere, nowhere, nowhere, ”

Fómoushka broke in, and Fímoushka took up the burden :—

“ Nowhere, nowhere, nowhere. ”

Then both together—

“ Bitter hardships follow it
Always, always, always, ”

and Fómoushka finished alone—

“ Always, always, always ! ”

“ Bravo ! ” exclaimed Páklin. “ That is the first verse ; now for the second ! ”

“ Certainly, ” answered Fómoushka ; “ only Snandúlia Samsónovna, what about my shake ? After my piece I want a shake. ”

“ Good, ” said Snandúlia, “ you shall have your shake. ”

Fómoushka began again :—

“ Has man in the world e'er loved
Without tasting of tortures ?
What lover worthy of the name
Has not wept, has not sighed ? ”

Then Fímoushka :—

“ Since a heart must in sorrow sink,
As a boat does in the sea,
Why then was it given us ? ”

“ For ill, for ill, for ill ! ”

exclaimed Fómoushka, and waited for Snandúlia to give the shake, which duly followed.

“ For ill, for ill, for ill, ”

repeated Fímoushka ; and then both in chorus :—

“Take, O God, our heart away,
Away, away, away!
Away, away, away!”

and another shake finished the song.

“Bravo, bravo!” they all exclaimed except Markélof, and even clapped their hands.

“I wonder,” thought Nejdánof, as soon as the applause had subsided, “whether they feel that they are playing the part of jesters? Perhaps they do not; perhaps they do, but think, ‘We do no one any harm, we even amuse people.’ And when one comes to think of it, they are right—a hundred times right.”

Influenced by these ideas he began to compliment them, in answer to which they only curtsayed slightly without rising from their chairs. At this moment, from the neighbouring room, probably a bedroom or workroom, whence for some time past had issued a whispering and rustling, suddenly appeared Poúfka the dwarf, accompanied by the nurse Vasílievna. Poúfka began to make faces and whine, while the nurse sometimes scolded, sometimes excited her.

Markélof, who had long been giving signs of impatience (as for Solómin, he simply smiled more than usual), suddenly turned to Fómoushka.

“I should not have expected,” he began, in his abrupt manner, “that you, with your education, for I hear that you are an admirer of Voltaire, would have derived amusement from a deformity which ought to be an object of pity.” Here he remembered that Páklin’s sister was deformed, and stopped suddenly, while Fómoushka grew red and murmured, “It is not I . . . she herself . . .” But Poúfka charged headlong at Markélof.

“What has made you take it into your head,” she cried, in a lisping voice, “to abuse my masters? They have helped me, lodged me, given me food and drink, so you are envious. Other people’s bread makes your

eyes look askant, does it ! You black-faced, wretched good-for-nothing, with moustaches like a blackbeetle !” And Poúfka showed with her short thick fingers what Markélof’s moustaches were like. Vasílievna was stretching her toothless old mouth to her ears, and her laugh was echoed in the neighbouring room.

“Of course it is not for me to blame you,” continued Markélof : “to nourish the poor and the deformed is a good work. But let me tell you that to live in comfort, in clover, as you do, and though you may not ruin any one else’s life, yet never to stir a finger for the good of your neighbour, that is not to be good ; I at least, to tell the truth, count such goodness as nought !”

Here Poúfka cried out deafeningly ; she did not understand a word of what Markélof had said, but the “black fellow” was scolding, how did he dare ! Vasílievna muttered something, and Fómoushka laid his hands on his breast, and, turning his face to his wife, said, almost sobbing, “Fímoushka darling, do you hear what our visitor says ? You and I are sinners, evil-doers, Pharisees, we live in clover, ai, ai We ought to be turned out of the house into the street and given a broom apiece to work for our livelihood, oh—ho !” On hearing such dismal words Poúfka howled worse than before, Fímoushka half closed her eyes, and bit her lips, taking in a breath as if for a good loud cry

Heaven knows how it would all have finished had not Páklin interfered.

“What is the matter ?” he broke in, laughing and gesticulating. “What is it all about ? How can you be so stupid ? Mr. Markélof was joking ; but as he looks very solemn, it seemed serious, and you were taken in ! Evfímia Pávlovna, my good friend, we must be going directly, so as a parting favour tell us

our fortunes ; you are first-rate at it ! Sister, get the cards ! ”

Fímoushka looked at her husband, but he seemed quite placid, so she calmed down.

“ The cards, the cards, ” she said, “ but I have forgotten, Sísła, it is long since I have taken them up. ”

But she took a pack of wonderful old cards, used for playing *ombre*, which Snandúlia handed her.

“ Whose fortune am I to tell ? ” she asked.

“ Why, everybody’s, ” said Páklin, and thought “ what a tractable old lady, one can turn her round one’s finger, she is quite charming. Yes, everybody’s, mother, ” he said out loud, “ tell us our destiny, our character, our future, everything ! ”

Fímoushka began to lay out the cards, but suddenly threw them aside. “ I need no cards, ” she said, “ I know each of you without them. And as a man’s nature is, such is his destiny. He ” (she pointed at Solómin) “ is a calm, steadfast man ; that one ” (she shook her finger at Markélof) “ is hot and headstrong ” (Poúfka put out her tongue at him) ; “ about you ” (she turned to Páklin) “ one need say nothing ; you know what you are, a featherbrain ; as for that one ”

She pointed at Nejdánof and hesitated.

“ Well, ” he said, “ tell me, please, what sort of a man am I ? ”

“ What sort of a man are you ” said Fímoushka, slowly ; “ you are to be pitied, you are ! ”

Nejdánof roused himself. “ To be pitied ? Why ? ”

“ Simply enough ! I pity you, that is all ! ”

“ But why ? ”

“ Why because my eyes tell it me. You think I am an old fool ? I am sharper than you, for all your red* hair ! You are to be pitied ; there is your fortune for you ! ”

* Red-haired people in Russia are looked upon as unusually clever, even rather uncanny.

They were all silent, then exchanged glances and were still silent.

"Well, farewell, good people," suddenly said Páklin. "We have stayed too long and tired you, I shouldn't wonder. These gentlemen must be going, and I am off too. Good-bye, thanks for your kindness."

"Good-bye, good-bye; come in again, don't overlook us," said both together. And Fómoushka suddenly began—

"Many, many, many years . . ."

"Many, many,"* sang Kalliópytch quite unexpectedly, as he opened the door to let the young people out.

And they all four found themselves in the street, in front of the plump little house, while through the window came Poúfka's shrill voice, "Fools, fools!"

Páklin laughed loudly, but no one responded. Markélof looked round at each one in turn, as if expecting some sign of indignation.

Solómin alone smiled as usual.

* The beginning of a Russian hymn wishing long life.

CHAPTER XX.

"Now," said Páklin, who was the first to speak, "we have been in the eighteenth century, let us go straight into the twentieth. Golouúshkin is such an advanced gentleman that it would be improper to count him as belonging to the nineteenth."

"Why, do you know him?" asked Nejdánof.

"The earth is filled with the glory of his name, and I said 'let us go,' because I mean to go with you."

"But how can you? You do not know him?"

"What does that matter? Did you know my love-birds?"

"But you introduced us!"

"Well, you can introduce me! You can have no secrets from me, and Golouúshkin is a man of broad views. You see if he is not delighted at a new acquaintance; and here in S. we are unceremonious."

"Yes," grumbled Markélof, "people here are rather too unceremonious."

Páklin shook his head.

"That was meant for me, I suppose. Well, I deserve it. But I will tell you what, my new acquaintance, put aside for a time those dismal thoughts which your bilious temperament suggests; and above all . . ."

"Sir," interrupted Markélof, sharply, "let me in my turn caution you as a new acquaintance that I never had the smallest inclination for joking, especially to-day. And how do you know my temperament?" (he emphasized the last word). "I somehow think it is not long since we first saw one another."

"Oh, enough, enough, don't be angry, and don't call all the gods to witness; I will believe you without that," said Páklin; and turning to Solómin, "O you!" he exclaimed, "whom the acute Fímoushka herself called a cool man, and who do indeed seem to have a soothing influence, tell me whether I really did mean to say anything unpleasant or to make jokes out of season? I only asked for permission to accompany you to Goloúshkin's; besides, I am a harmless person, and it is not my fault if Mr. Markélof's face is yellow!"

Solómin shrugged first one shoulder, then the other; he had a way of doing so when he did not quite know what to answer.

"Of course, Mr. Páklin," he at length said; "you could not offend any one, nor do you wish to; and why should you not go with us to Goloúshkin's? I fancy we shall spend our time there as agreeably as with your relations, and about as profitably."

Páklin shook his finger at him.

"I see you too can be spiteful; but you are coming to Goloúshkin's, are you not?"

"Of course I am coming. My day is wasted anyhow."

"Well, then, en avant! marchons! into the twentieth century. Nejdánof, you are an advanced man, lead the way!"

"All right, come along! But don't repeat your jokes, or people might think you had not too many of them."

"Enough to bury such as you," answered Páklin,

gaily, and stepped out into a swinging walk, or rather, as he put it, "a swinging limp."

"An amusing fellow!" remarked Solómin to Nejdánof, as they followed arm-in-arm; "if we are all sent to Siberia, which Heaven forefend! we shall at all events have some one to amuse us."

Markélof walked behind in silence.

Meanwhile in Golouúshkin's house everything was being done to provide a superb dinner, in fact something chic. An oúkha* had been made, very greasy and very nasty; various "patésho" and "phrikaséi" had been prepared (for Golouúshkin, as befitted a man who, though a dissenter, stood on the height of European civilization, had adopted French cookery, and had hired a cook who had been turned out of a club for dirtiness), and, to crown all, several bottles of champagne had been put in ice.

Golouúshkin met the visitors with his usual clumsy gestures, hurried manner, and everlasting giggle. He was delighted to see Páklin, as the latter had predicted, and asked, "One of ours?" and, without waiting for an answer, exclaimed, "Of course, he must be!" Then he related how he had that moment left "that queer fellow, the governor, who is always bothering me about almshouses or some nonsense of the kind." And it was impossible to say whether Golouúshkin was more pleased at being received by the governor or at having the opportunity of abusing him before some of the leaders of the young generation. Then he presented the proselyte whom he had promised to show them. And who did this said proselyte turn out to be? That same consumptive, smooth little man with the sharp face, who had come in with a message that morning, and whom Golouúshkin called Vása, one of his clerks. "He is not eloquent," said Golouúshkin, pointing at him with his whole hand,

* Fish soup.

“but devoted to our cause with all his heart.” And Vása only bowed and blushed and winked and showed his teeth, so that it was impossible to make out what he was—a mere fool, or the veriest scoundrel and impostor!

“Come, gentlemen, come, dinner is on the table,” called Golouúshkin; so they sat down after a mighty *zakouska*.* Directly after the soup, Golouúshkin called for the champagne. It gurgled out of the bottle into the glasses in half-frozen lumps which looked like tallow. “I drink to our—our undertaking,” exclaimed Golouúshkin, winking as he spoke, and nodding in the direction of the servant, as if to show that in the presence of a stranger one must be careful. Vása, the proselyte, remained silent, but though he sat on the edge of his chair, and generally behaved with a servility altogether incompatible with the principles to which, according to Golouúshkin, he was devoted with his whole heart, yet he did drink desperately; but the others all talked, that is, Páklin and the host, especially Páklin. Nejdánof was secretly annoyed; Markélof was as angry and indignant as he had been at the Soubótchefs, but in a different manner; Solómin sat watching them.

Páklin was in his glory. His amusing chatter delighted Golouúshkin, who did not in the least suspect that the “little lame fellow” was all the time whispering in the ear of his neighbour Nejdánof the most bitter sarcasms on him, Golouúshkin! He even thought that Páklin was a good, simple fellow whom one could treat familiarly, and that was one of the many reasons why he was pleased with him. Had Páklin been sitting next to him he would long since have poked him in the ribs with his finger, or clapped him on the shoulder; as it was he nodded and wagged his head at him across the table; but between them sat first

* Preliminary whet.

Markélof, like a threatening storm-cloud, and then Solómin. So Golóushkin could only laugh, which he did at every word Páklin uttered, laughing on trust, before the joke, smacking himself with the palm of his hand and showing his blueish gums. Páklin soon understood what was wanted, and began to abuse every one and everything (a task by the way for which he was eminently suited); conservatives, liberals, officials, barristers, statesmen, landowners, provincial assemblies, town councils, Moscow and Petersburg, all alike!

Golóushkin kept on interrupting; "Yes, yes, that is it; yes, just so! Our mayor, for instance, an absolute donkey, an impenetrable blockhead! I tell him this, that, or the other, and he doesn't understand a word I say; he is as bad as the governor!"

"Why, is the governor stupid?" inquired Páklin.

"I tell you he is an ass!"

"Have you noticed whether he snores or wheezes?"

"What do you mean?" asked Golóushkin, in wonder.

"Why, don't you know? In our dear Russia important statesmen snore, distinguished generals wheeze through their noses, and only the very greatest officials both wheeze and snore together."

Golóushkin shrieked with laughter, till the tears absolutely ran down. "Yes, yes!" he said, "he wheezes, he wheezes; he is a military man!"

"Oh, you idiot!" thought Páklin.

Soon after Golóushkin exclaimed, "Everything with us is rotten, wherever you touch. Everything, everything!"

"My worthy Kapitón Andréitch," remarked Páklin, sententiously, "trust me, half measures are of no use here!" At the same time he whispered to Nejdánof, "Why does he perpetually wriggle his arms, as if his coat cut him under the shoulders?"

"Half measures!" shouted Golóushkin, suddenly

ceasing to laugh, and assuming a ferocious expression. "There is only one thing to be done; root and branch is the word! Vása, drink, you son of a dog!"

"I am drinking, Kapitón Andréitch!" answered the clerk, emptying a tumbler down his throat.

Goloúshkin also "put away" a glass.

"How is it he does not burst?" whispered Páklin to Nejdánof.

"Habit!" answered the latter.

But it was not only the clerk who drank. By degrees the wine began to have its effect, and one after another they all, even Solómin, joined in the conversation.

Nejdánof, with a kind of disgust and contempt for himself for not keeping up his character and for uselessly beating the waves, began to say that it was time to cease amusing themselves with words, time to act; he even talked about the "soil" he had found. And then without noticing that he was contradicting himself, he demanded to be shown the real palpable support on which they could rely, for he himself could not see it. "In society there is no sympathy, in the people there is no appreciation. . . . what are you to do?" Of course no one answered him; not because no answer was possible, but because every one was arguing from his own point of view. Markélof began in a low, angry voice, persistent and monotonous ("just as if he were chopping cabbage," remarked Páklin). What he was actually talking about was not quite clear; at times the word "artillery" was distinguishable—he was probably mentioning the defects which he had discovered in its organization. Germans and aides-de-camp also got their share. Solómin remarked that there were two ways of waiting—waiting and doing nothing, waiting and pushing the work forward.

"We don't want your gradual improvers!" said Markélof, gloomily.

"The 'gradual improvers,' as you call them, have hitherto worked from above," remarked Solómin; "we will try from below."

"We don't want them, devil take them!" broke in Goloúshkin fiercely; "we must do it at a blow, ali at once!"

"That means that you will jump out of window?"

"I will!" yelled Goloúshkin, "I will jump! And Vása here will jump. If I tell him, he will jump! Eh, Vása, won't you?"

The clerk finished his glass of champagne.

"Wherever you go, Kapitón Andréitch, I follow you! It is not for us to reason!"

"I should think not! I would twist you into a ram's horn!"

Soon there began what is called in the language of drunkards the building of the Tower of Babel. A mighty noise and confusion arose. As the first snow-flakes twist and turn in rapid dance in the yet warm autumn air, so in the heated atmosphere of Goloúshkin's dining-room words of every sort whirled, crossed, and encountered each other; progress, government, literature, taxation; the church question, the woman's rights question, the law question; classicism, realism, Nihilism, communism; international, clerical, liberal, capital; administration, organization, association, and even crystallization! This same hubbub seemed to delight Goloúshkin, he was in ecstasies; it seemed to contain the real essence of the matter. "See what fellows we are! Out of the way, or I crush you! Kapitón Goloúshkin is coming!" Vása the clerk at length got so drunk that he began to laugh and alk in his plate, and at last shouted as if he were mad, "What the devil is a *pro-gymnasium*?"

Goloúshkin suddenly rose, and tossing back his

purple face, on which the expression of coarse power and triumph was strangely mingled with that of secret dread and even fear, shouted, "I sacrifice another thousand: fetch it along, Vása!" whereon Vása answered in a low tone, "Go ahead!" Páklin, pale and heated (for during the last quarter of an hour he had drunk almost as much as the clerk), sprang from his seat, and, raising his hands above his head, said slowly, "Sacrifice! He said sacrifice! Oh, pollution of a holy word! Sacrifice! No one dares to elevate himself to thee, no one has the strength to fulfil the duties which thou imposest, at least none of us here present, and yet this self-satisfied fool, this senseless sack, shakes his inflated person, scatters a handful of roubles, and cries 'Sacrifice!' and he claims gratitude for it; he expects a laurel crown! The scoundrel!" Golóushkin either did not clearly hear or did not understand what Páklin was saying, or possibly took his words as a joke, for he repeated once more, "Yes, a thousand roubles! What Kapitón Golóushkin has said is sacred!" He suddenly thrust his hand into a side pocket. "Here it is—the money. Here, take it and remember Kapitón!" As soon as he became excited he talked of himself in the third person, as little children do. Nejdánof collected the notes which were scattered over the wine-sodden table-cloth. After this there was no reason for stopping; beside which it was getting late. They all rose, took their hats and departed. The contact of the fresh air mad their heads turn, especially Páklin's.

"Whither now?" he said, not without difficulty.

"I don't know where you are going," said Solómin, "but I am off home."

"To the factory?"

"To the factory."

"Now, by night, on foot?"

"Why not? There are no wolves or robbers

here, and I am a good walker. It is cool, too, by night."

"But it is four versts!"

"Well, and what if it were five! Good night, gentlemen!"

Solómin buttoned up his coat, pulled his cap on to his forehead, lighted a cigar, and started down the street with long strides.

"Where are you going?" asked Páklin of Nejdánof.

"With him"; he pointed at Markélof, who was standing motionless with his arms folded across his breast.

"We have a trap and horses here."

"All right . . . I, brother, shall go back to the oasis, to Fómoushka and Fýmoushka. And I will tell you what, brother! There is folly in that house, and folly in this. But their folly, the folly of the eighteenth century, is nearer the Russian nature than that of the twentieth. Good-bye, gentlemen; I am drunk, don't mind me. Listen once more to what I say. A better woman than my sister . . . Snandúlia . . . you won't find in the world; and she, you see, is hunchbacked, and her name is . . . Snandúlia! And it is always so in the world! But it is right she should be called so. Do you know who Saint Snandúlia was? A beneficent woman, who went about prisons and ministered to the prisoners and the sick! However, good-bye! good-bye, Nejdánof, you pitiful man! Good-bye, you officer, you . . . the solemn man!"

He set off to the oasis limping and unsteady, while Markélof and Nejdánof sought the stables where they had left their conveyance, ordered the horses to be put to, and half an hour later were rolling along the high road.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE sky was covered with low clouds, and though it was not quite dark, and the wheel-tracks on the road in front were just visible, yet on either side everything was misty, and the outlines of separate objects became large confused masses. It was a dull, uncertain night; the damp wind blew in fitful gusts, bringing a scent of rain and of the broad stretches of corn land. When they had passed the clump of oak-trees which was the landmark for turning into the by-road, matters became even worse. The narrow path at times almost disappeared, and the coachman began to drive slower.

"We must take care we do not lose our way!" remarked Nejdánof, who had been silent up to this time.

"Never fear; we shall not lose our way," said Markélof. "Two misfortunes never happen in one day."

"What was the first misfortune?"

"Do you count it as nothing that we have lost a day?"

"You mean about Goloúshkin, of course! One ought not to drink so much wine. My head is splitting!"

"I do not mean Golouúshkin. He at least gave us money, so we gained some advantage from our visit."

"You cannot be regretting that Páklin took us to see his . . . what did he call them? . . . his love-birds?"

"I neither regret it nor am pleased at it. I am not the kind of man to be interested in such toys. That was not the misfortune I meant."

"What did you mean then?"

Markélof made no answer, but only stirred uneasily in his corner, as if he were shrinking back. Nejdánof could not see his face clearly; his moustaches alone stood out in a straight horizontal line; but since the morning he had felt that there was something on Markélof's mind with which he had better not meddle—a kind of deep and secret dissatisfaction.

"Sergéi Mikháilovitch!" he began, after a pause, "can you seriously be pleased with those letters of Mr. Kisliakóf which you gave me to read to-day? Excuse the severity of the expression, but they are rubbish!"

Markélof roused himself. "To begin with," he said, fiercely, "I do not in the least share your opinion of those letters. I consider them very remarkable—and conscientious; secondly, Kisliakóf works and struggles, and above all he believes—believes in the cause, in a revolution! Let me tell you one thing, Alexéi Dmítritch, I have remarked that you are cooling down; you no longer believe in the cause."

"What makes you draw that conclusion?" said Nejdánof, slowly.

"What? Your own words, your own conduct altogether. To-day at Golouúshkin's who said that he did not see on what support we could rely? You! Who asked for information? You again! And when that friend of yours, that empty joker and buffoon, Páklin,

raised his eyes to heaven and maintained that not one of us had the strength to sacrifice himself, who encouraged him, who nodded his head affirmatively? Was it not you? Speak of yourself as you like, think of yourself as you will . . . that is your business, but I know men who have had the strength to reject everything which makes life fair, the happiness of love itself—that they might serve their convictions, that they might not betray them! But to-day, of course, you were not thinking of that!”

“To-day? Why to-day particularly?”

“Don’t be a hypocrite, for God’s sake, you happy Don Juan, you myrtle-crowned lover!” cried Markélof, entirely forgetting that the coachman could hear every word perfectly, without even turning round on the box. It was true that the coachman at that moment was much more intent on the road than on the quarrels of the gentlemen who were sitting behind his back. He was talking carefully and even rather timidly to the centre horse, which was shaking its head and almost sitting down on its haunches as it held back the tarantas from slipping too fast down a certain steep slope, which had no business whatever to be where it was.

“Excuse me,” said Nejdánof, “I don’t quite understand you.”

Markélof broke into a forced and vicious laugh. “You don’t understand me, don’t you! I know everything, my dear sir! I know to whom you declared your love yesterday; I know whom you have enthralled by your good looks and your eloquence; I know who lets you into her room after ten o’clock at night!”

“Master,” exclaimed the coachman suddenly, turning to Markélof, “hold the reins a minute while I get down and look! I think we must have got off the road. There is a drain here, or something . . .”

The tarantas was indeed all on one side.

Markélof caught the reins which the coachman handed him and continued as loudly as before,—

“I do not blame you in the least, Alexéi Dmítritch. You took advantage . . . you were right. I only say that I do not wonder at your cooling down towards the cause; I repeat, you are not thinking about it. And I add as coming from myself, Where is the man who can guess beforehand what will enchant a young girl’s heart, or find out what it desires?”

“I understand you now,” began Nejdánof. “I understand your bitterness, and guess who it was that watched us and hastened to inform you . . .”

“It is not any particular merit,” continued Markélof, pretending not to hear Nejdánof and intentionally prolonging all the words in a sing-song tone; “it is not any extraordinary mental or bodily qualities. No! It is simply the luck, the cursed luck, of all illegitimate children, of all bastards!”

The last sentence Markélof uttered in a quick, broken voice, and after it stopped suddenly, as if turned to stone.

Nejdánof, even in the darkness, felt his face grow pale and a shiver run over his cheeks. He with difficulty restrained himself from springing on Markélof, and catching him by the throat, “This insult must be avenged by blood . . . !”

“I have found the road,” exclaimed the coachman, appearing close to the off front wheel. “I had made a little mistake, borne too much to the left; it is all right now. We shall be home in a twinkling; it is not a verst. Keep your seats, gentlemen.”

He clambered on to his seat, took the reins from Markélof, and turned the centre horse to one side. The tarantas gave two violent jolts, then rolled along more evenly and quickly; the darkness seemed to rise and disperse; there was a smell of smoke, and a dark

mass appeared in front ; a light twinkled and vanished again, then another ; a dog barked

“Our cottages,” said the coachman. “Now, my little kittens !”

The lights reappeared more numerous and closer.

“After such an insult,” at length said Nejdánof, “you will easily understand, Sergéi Mikháilovitch, that it is impossible for me to spend the night under your roof, therefore I have to ask you, unpleasant though it be for me to do so, to let your tarantas, as soon as we arrive, conduct me to the town ; to-morrow I will find a means of returning home, and then you will receive a communication from me which you in all probability expect.”

Markélof did not answer for a moment.

“Nejdánof !” he at last said, in a voice not loud, but almost despairing, “Nejdánof ! for God’s sake come into my house, if only to let me beg your pardon on my knees ! Nejdánof, forget my mad words ! Oh, if any one could know how unhappy I am !” Markélof struck himself on the breast, and it resounded almost like a groan. “Nejdánof, be generous ! give me your hand. Do not refuse to forgive me !”

Nejdánof stretched out his hand,—hesitatingly, perhaps, but he did it ; Markélof gripped it so tightly that he almost cried out.

At this moment the tarantas stopped before Markélof’s house.

“Listen, Nejdánof,” said Markélof, in his study, a quarter of an hour later.

He called him “thou,” and in that unexpected “thou,”—addressed to a man whom he knew to be his fortunate rival, whom he had just mortally insulted, and whom he had been ready to kill, to tear in pieces,—in that “thou” there was hopeless renunciation and humble, sad entreaty, and, as it were, a right

Nejdánof recognized that right by also calling Markélof "thou."

"Listen," he said, "I told you this moment that I had rejected the bliss of love, had thrust it from me simply that I might serve my convictions. That was nonsense—boasting! Nothing of the sort was ever offered me, so there was nothing for me to reject. I was born unlucky, and so I shall remain; and perhaps it ought to be so. I am not made for that; perhaps there is something for me to do elsewhere. If you can unite the two—love and be loved—and, at the same time, serve the cause, you are a lucky man I envy you but I cannot, I cannot. You are lucky! and I cannot."

Markélof said all this in a quiet voice, sitting on a low chair, with his head bowed down and both arms drooping by his side. Nejdánof stood before him, sunk in a reverie, yet attentive; and though Markélof called him lucky, he neither looked nor felt so.

"When I was young a girl jilted me," continued Markélof; "she was a charming girl—but she jilted me all the same; and for whom? For a German, an aide-de-camp! Now Mariánna . . ." He stopped. It was the first time he had pronounced her name, and it seemed to burn his lips. "Mariánna never deceived me; she told me at once that I did not please her. And why should I? So she gave herself to you . . . Well, why not? she was free."

"But, stop! stop!" exclaimed Nejdánof; "what are you talking about? You say, 'Gave herself.' I do not know what your sister may have written to you, but . . ."

"I don't mean that; but she has given herself to you morally, heart and soul," said Markélof who, however, for some reason, seemed pleased by Nejdánof's exclamation; "and she has done well. As for my

sister . . . of course she did not mean to hurt me. That is, it is really all the same to her ; but I expect she hates you and Mariánna too. She told no lies ; but it is all the same, let us say no more of her."

"Yes," thought Nejdánof, "she does hate us."

"It is all for the best," continued Markélof, without changing his position. "The last fetters are taken off me now ; nothing any longer hinders me. Don't you mind Golóushkin's being a fool ; that does not matter. And Kisliakóf's letters too, perhaps, are ridiculous. That may be ; but we must look at the main object. According to him all is ready everywhere. Perhaps you do not believe that ?"

Nejdánof did not answer.

"Well, perhaps you are right ; but if we are to wait for the moment when everything is absolutely ready, we shall never begin. If one weighs all the consequences, there are sure to be some against us. For instance, when our predecessors were planning the abolition of serfdom, could they foresee that one of the consequences of that abolition would be the appearance of a whole class of landlord usurers, who sell the peasant a quarter of bad rye for six roubles, and receive from him, firstly" (Markélof bent down one finger), "work equivalent to the six roubles ; secondly" (he bent down another finger), "a whole quarter of good rye," and again (he bent down one more), "something extra for the trouble : that is, who suck the last drops of blood out of the peasant ? Now our emancipators could not have foreseen that, could they ? And even if they had foreseen it, they would have done well to free the peasants, and not to weigh all the consequences ; so I have made up my mind."

Nejdánof looked in an inquiring and puzzled way at Markélof, but the latter turned his head aside. His brows were downcast and hid his pupils ; he was biting his lips and moustaches.

"Yes; I have made up my mind," he repeated, striking his knee violently with his brown, hairy fist. "I am obstinate, you know. It is not for nothing my mother was a Little Russian."

Then he rose, and, shuffling along as if his legs had suddenly become weak, he went into his bedroom and fetched a small mounted portrait of Mariánna.

"Take this," he said, in a melancholy but calm voice, "I drew it once on a time. I am a bad artist, but look, I think it is like" (the portrait, drawn in profile with a pencil, was really like). "Take it, brother, it is my legacy. With this portrait I give you not my rights, for I never had any, but everything, you know. I give you everything—and her. She, brother, is a good. . . ."

Markélof stopped, his chest was heaving visibly.

"Take it. You are not angry with me, are you? Well, take it then. I shall no longer want anything of that kind."

Nejdánof took it, but a strange feeling oppressed him. He thought that he had no right to take this gift; that if Markélof had known what was passing in his mind he would not have given it him. Nejdánof held in his hand the little round piece of drawing-paper, carefully set in a black frame with a narrow border of gold, and did not know what to do with it. "This is the whole life of a man that I am holding," he thought. He understood what a sacrifice Markélof was making, but why for him, for him especially? Should he return the portrait? No! That would be even a worse insult. Was not that face dear to him? did he not love her?

Nejdánof raised his eyes towards Markélof with a sort of inward dread—was he not looking at him, endeavouring to seize his thoughts? But Markélof was still staring at the corner and gnawing his moustache.

The old servant came into the room with a candle.

Markélof roused himself. "Time to sleep, Alexéi," he exclaimed. "Morning's counsel is clearer than evening's. I will give you horses to-morrow, you will go off home, and so, good-bye."

"Good-bye to you too, old man!" he suddenly added, turning round to the old servant and clapping him on the shoulder. "Don't think ill of me!"

The old man was so astonished that he almost dropped the candle, and the look which he fixed on his master expressed something more than his habitual melancholy.

Nejdánof went to his room. He did not feel well. His head was aching from the wine he had drunk, his ears were singing, and he saw colours before his eyes even when he closed them. Goloúshkin, Vásia the clerk, Fómoushka and Fímoushka, were all revolving before him; the image of Mariánna remained afar off as if afraid of approaching him. All that he himself had said or done seemed such a lie and imposture, such unnecessary and hypocritical rubbish, and the object on which they were bent, to which they aspired, seemed to be hidden in some unknown and inaccessible place, behind a dozen locks, somewhere in a cavern.

Again and again he thought of rising and going down to Markélof, and saying to him, "Take your present; take it back!"

"Pheugh! What a disgusting thing life is!" he at last exclaimed.

The next day he left early. Markélof was already on the steps, surrounded by peasants. Whether he had summoned them, or whether they had come of their own accord, Nejdánof did not learn, for Markélof said good-bye in a dry, short tone; but he seemed to be about to communicate something important to them. The old servant was standing by with his everlasting, melancholy gaze.

The tarantas soon passed the town, and on reaching the open country rolled more smoothly along. The horses were the same; but the coachman, either because Nejdánof lived in a rich house or for some other reason of his own, counted on a good present for drink-money, and it is well known that when the coachman has drunk or is certain of drinking the horses go capitably. It was real June weather, though cool; high, clearly cut clouds in a dark-blue sky, a strong, even breeze, the dust on the road beaten down by the rain of the previous day; the willows were shivering and glistening as the wind caught them; all was in motion and blowing about; the cry of the quail came in a thin whistle from the distant hills, across the green valleys, as if the very cry had wings, and was flying past on them; the rooks shone in the sunlight, and on the even line of the horizon moved some black specks—the peasants busy ploughing their fallows a second time.

But Nejdánof observed none of all this; he did not even notice that he had reached Sipiágin's property, so wrapt was he in his thoughts.

However, he started when he saw the roof of the house, the upper story, the window of Mariánna's room. "Yes," he said to himself, and his heart warmed within him, "he was right, she is a good girl, and I love her."

CHAPTER XXII.

HE changed his clothes quickly and went down to give Kólia his lesson. Sipiágin, whom he met in the dining-room, bowed politely but coldly, and muttering through his teeth, "I hope you have had a pleasant journey," went on into his study. The great statesman had made up his diplomatic mind that as soon as the holidays were over he would send back to Petersburg this tutor, who was "really too red," and in the mean time he determined to keep a watch on him. *Je n'ai pas eu la main heureuse cette fois-ci* he thought, however, "*j'aurais pu tomber pire.*"

Valentína Mikháilovna's opinion of Nejdánof was much more energetic and decided. She now simply could not endure him; he, that boy, had dared to insult her! Mariánna had not been mistaken; it was Valentína Mikháilovna who was listening to her and Nejdánof in the passage. This grand lady did not despise even such means. During the two days that he had been absent, although she said nothing to her "thoughtless" relative, yet she constantly gave her to understand that she knew everything, that she might have been indignant had she not been so astonished, and would have been even more astonished had she not felt contempt and compassion. An inward and

half-concealed disdain was expressed in her face, her eyebrows were arched with a tinge of raillery combined with pity whenever she spoke to or looked at Mariánna; those lovely eyes rested on her with gentle wonder and sorrowful horror at the presumptuous girl who, after all her eccentricities and whims, had ended by kissing—yes, kissing! a kind of half-schoolboy, half-student, in a dark room!

Poor Mariánna! Her proud and stern lips had never yet been touched by a kiss.

However, Valentína Mikháilovna gave her husband no hint of the discovery she had made; she contented herself by accompanying the few words she had to say to Mariánna in his presence with a meaning sneer which had absolutely no connexion with the phrase. She even repented somewhat of having written to her brother; but on the whole she preferred repenting and having written the letter to not repenting and not having written it.

Nejdánof only saw Mariánna for a short time in the dining-room at breakfast. He thought that she had grown thin and yellow; she was not pretty that day, but the quick glance which she threw at him as he came in went to his heart. Valentína Mikháilovna looked at them as if she were saying all the time, "Excellent! My compliments! Admirably acted!" At the same time she was trying to read on his face whether Markélof had shown him the letter or not. At last she decided that he had.

Sipiágin, on hearing that Nejdánof had been to the factory which Solómin superintended, began to question him about a "commercial establishment so remarkable in every way," but soon discovering from his answers that he had really seen nothing at all, relapsed into a majestic silence, as if reproaching himself with having expected any observations of value from such an unformed mind. As they came out of

the dining-room Mariánna managed to whisper to Nejdánof,—

“Wait for me at the old birch copse at the end of the garden ; I will be there as soon as possible.”

Nejdánof thought, “So she calls me ‘thou’ as well.” And how pleasant it was, though a little awkward, and how strange it would have been, how impossible, if she had begun to call him ‘you’ again, if she had drawn back from him ! He felt that this would have been a misfortune. He did not know yet whether he was in love with her, but she had become dear to him, and intimate, and, above all, necessary to his existence. This he felt fully.

The copse to which Mariánna had sent him consisted of about a hundred tall and old birches, mostly weeping birches. The breeze was still blowing ; the long masses of branches dangled and waved like dishevelled locks, the clouds were still drifting swiftly high overhead, and each time one passed over the sun things around became not dark, but of a uniform tint. But the cloud passed over, and everywhere the bright patches of sunlight again began their tumultuous movement. They danced and entangled themselves in the patches of shade, and all was life and motion as before, but a kind of holiday joy was there besides. With such a burst of joy does passion enter a dark, tumultuous heart, and such a heart did Nejdánof bring to the interview.

He leaned against the trunk of a birch and began to wait. He hardly knew his own feelings, and hardly cared to know them ; they were more excited and yet lighter than at Markélof’s. Above all he wished to see and speak to her ; the knot which suddenly binds two human beings had encircled him. Nejdánof thought of the rope which is launched from the quay to a steamer when it is nearing the shore. See, it is passed round a block, and the ship stops. . . .

In harbour, thank Heaven!

Suddenly he started. He saw the flutter of a dress afar in the path. It was she; but whether she was coming to him or going away he could not tell, till he saw that the patches of light on her figure moved upwards. She was coming closer. Had she been going away they would have passed downwards. A few instants more and she was standing before him with a bright face of welcome, with a gentle light in her eyes, with lips smiling slightly but gaily. He caught the hands which she stretched out to him, but for a moment could say nothing; and she too was silent. She had walked fast and was panting, but was evidently greatly pleased that he too was so pleased to see her.

She was the first to speak.

"Now tell me quickly what has been decided."

Nejdánof seemed astonished.

"Decided! Why what was there to decide just now?"

"Oh, you understand me. Tell me what you talked about? Whom did you see? Did you make Solómin's acquaintance? Tell me all—all! Wait a moment. Come a little further. I know a place where we cannot be seen so well."

She carried him off, and he followed her obediently through the tall, scant, dry grass. They came to the place she meant, where a large birch was lying, which had fallen in some storm; on this they seated themselves.

"Now tell me!" she repeated; but at once added, "Oh, I am so glad to see you! I began to think these two days would never end. You know I am certain now that Valentína Mikháilovna was listening to us."

"She wrote about it to Markélof," said Nejdánof.

"To him?" Mariánna stopped and gradually grew

red all over, not from shame, but from another and a stronger feeling. "Wicked, bad woman!" she whispered slowly, "she had no right to do that. Never mind! Come, tell me everything."

Nejdánof began to speak. Mariánna listened with motionless attention, and only interrupted him when she noticed that he was hurrying, not dwelling on details. However, the details of his journey were not all equally interesting to her. She laughed over Fómoushka and Fímoushka, but they did not interest her. Their life was too far removed from hers. ✓

"It is exactly as if you were talking to me about Nebuchadnezzar," she remarked.

But what Markélof said, what even Goloúshkin said (though she at once understood what kind of creature he was), and, above all, what Solómin thought of matters, and what sort of a man he seemed, that was what she wanted to know, what she was uneasy about. "When, when?" was the question always moving in her brain, and coming to her lips all the time that Nejdánof was speaking. He seemed to avoid everything which could give a direct answer to that question. He himself began to notice that he was dwelling on those details which least interested Mariánna, and was always coming back to them. A humorous description she was impatient at; a sceptical or melancholy tone grieved her. She wanted him always to come back to "the cause," "the question." Here no prolixity of language seemed to weary her. Nejdánof remembered a time when he was spending the summer in the country-house of some friends, before he was a student, and when he had taken to telling the children stories. They, too, did not appreciate descriptions or expressions of purely personal feeling; they, too, demanded action, facts! Mariánna was not a child, but in the straightforward simplicity of her character she was like a child.

Nejdánof praised Markélof sincerely and warmly, and spoke of Solómin with great sympathy. While using almost enthusiastic expressions about him, he asked himself what it was that gave him such a high opinion of the man. He had said nothing specially clever ; some of his words had even been opposed to Nejdánof's convictions.

"A well-balanced mind," he thought, "that is it ; a solid, cool man, as Fímoushka said, of broad ideas ; his strength is calm and firm ; he knows what he wants, and is confident in himself, and excites confidence in others ; there is no excitement, and there is the evenly poised mind, just what is wanting in me !"

Nejdánof was silent, buried in thought, but presently he felt a hand laid on his shoulder. He raised his head ; Mariánna was looking at him with a tender and anxious glance.

"What is the matter, my friend ?" she asked.

He took her hand from his shoulder, and for the first time kissed this small but strong hand.

Mariánna laughed slightly, as if wondering how such a politeness had come into his head. Then she, too, relapsed into thought.

"Markélof showed you Valentína Mikháilovna's letter ?" she at length asked.

"Yes."

"What did he say ?"

"He ? He is a most noble, self-sacrificing man. He . . ." Nejdánof thought of telling Mariánna about the portrait, but refrained, and only repeated—
"is a most noble man !"

"Yes, he is indeed."

Mariánna was again silent, and suddenly turning to Nejdánof, as they sat together on the birch-trunk, said quickly,—

"Then what have you decided ?"

Nejdánof shrugged his shoulders.

"I have told you already—nothing as yet ; we must wait longer."

"Wait ? Wait for what ?"

"The last instructions." ("I am telling a lie thought Nejdánof.)

"From whom ?"

"From, you know, from Vasíli Nikoláevitch. As we must wait, too, till Ostrodúmof returns."

Mariánna looked inquiringly at Nejdánof.

"Tell me," she said, "have you ever seen Vas Nikoláevitch ?"

"I have seen him twice, for a moment."

"Is he a remarkable man ?"

"What shall I say ? He is the chief now, and directs everything. In our cause we cannot do without discipline. We must obey." ("And *that* is nonsense, too," thought Nejdánof.)

"What is he like in person ?"

"A short, stout, dark man. A bony Kalmuck face—a coarse face. But his eyes are very bright."

"And how does he speak ?"

"He does not speak, so much as command."

"How did he become chief ?"

"Because he is a man of character. Recoils before nothing. If necessary, he will kill a man ; and people are afraid of him."

"And what is Solómin like ?" said Mariánna, after a pause.

"Solómin, too, is not very handsome, only he has a good face, plain and honourable. Among Seminarians—the good ones—such faces occur."

Nejdánof described Solómin in detail. Mariánna looked long and steadily at him, and then said, as talking to herself,—

"You, too, have a good face. I should think that with you would be easy."

Nejdánof was touched by her words. He took her hand again to raise it to his lips.

"Wait a little before you are too amiable," said Mariánna, laughing; she always laughed when her hand was kissed, "you don't know; I have a sin to confess."

"What is it?"

"Why, while you were away I went into your room, and there on your table I saw a book with verses—"

Nejdánof started; he remembered that he had left the book on the table in his room.

"And—I am very sorry—but I could not overcome my curiosity, and read them. Are they your verses?"

"They are; and do you know, Mariánna, that the best proof of how attached I am to you, and how I trust you, is that I am almost not angry with you?"

"Almost? Then you are angry, if only a little? By the way, you call me Mariánna. Why should I call you Nejdánof. I will call you Alexéi. And the piece which begins 'My dear friend, when I die'—is that yours, too?"

"It is, it is! But drop that subject. Do not torture me."

Mariánna shook her head.

"It is very melancholy. I hope you wrote it before you knew me. But the lines are good, as far as I can judge. I think you might have become a writer, only I know for certain that a calling is open to you higher and greater than that of a writer. It was well enough to occupy yourself with that formerly, when the other was impossible."

Nejdánof threw a quick glance at her.

"You think so? I agree with you. Better to perish here than to succeed there."

Mariánna rose impetuously.

"Yes, my friend," she exclaimed, "you are right!" and her whole face beamed, shone with the light and

fire of enthusiasm, with the charm given by noble sentiments. "You are right; but perhaps we shall not perish at once. We shall succeed, you will see. We shall be useful. Our life will not be lost. ~~We will go among the people. You know some trade? No? Well, all the same, we will work; will teach them, our brothers, all we know. I, if needful, will cook, wash, or sew. . . . You will see, you will see . . . and there will be no reward but happiness, happiness. . . .~~"

She ceased; but her eyes gleamed as she looked into the distance—not that which lay before her, but another, unknown, untried, but which she clearly saw. . . .

Nejdánof bent towards her.

"Oh, Mariánna!" he whispered, "I am not worthy of you!"

She suddenly started.

"It is time. I must be going," she said, "or they will be seeking us directly. However, I think Valentína Mikháilovna has given me up. In her eyes, I am lost!"

Mariánna uttered this word with such a bright, joyous face that Nejdánof could not help smiling as he looked at her and repeated, "Lost!"

"Only she is very indignant," continued Mariánna, "that you are not at her feet. But that is all stuff. Let us come to the point. I cannot remain here. I must fly."

"Fly?" repeated Nejdánof.

"Yes, fly; for you will not stop here, will you? We will go together. We must work together. You will come with me, will you not?"

"To the end of the world!" exclaimed Nejdánof; and his voice unexpectedly failed him from excitement and overwhelming gratitude. "To the end of the world!" and at that moment he would have gone

with her, without shrinking, to any place she would!

Mariánna understood, and sighed tenderly and happily.

“Then take my hand. Do not kiss it; but grasp it firmly, as that of a friend, of a comrade—so!”

They walked home together, thoughtful but happy. The young grass yielded to their feet; the young leaves rustled around; the patches of light and shade ran merrily over them; and they both smiled at the restless motion and at the brisk freshness of the breeze; at the brightness of the leaves, at their own youth and at each other.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE dawn had already appeared in the sky on the morning after Golouúshkin's dinner when Solómin, after striding his four versts briskly, knocked at the wicket of the high palisade which surrounded the factory. The watchman let him in at once, and, followed by three watch-dogs, wagging their bushy tails with wide sweeps, escorted him to his room with respectful attention. He was evidently pleased by the safe return of his chief.

"Why did you come by night, Vasíli Fedótitch? We only expected you to-morrow."

"It is all right, Gavríla. It is pleasanter walking by night."

The relations between Solómin and the workmen were excellent, though somewhat unusual. They respected him as a superior, but treated him as an equal—as one of themselves; but in their eyes he was very wise! "What Vasíli Fedótitch has said is gospel truth; because he has gone through every kind of learning, and would put every Englishman that ever was into his pocket!" And, in fact, a great English manufacturer did once visit the factory; and whether it was because Solómin spoke to him in English, or because he really was impressed with his knowledge, but at any rate he

kept patting him on the shoulder and laughing, and inviting him to go back to Liverpool, saying to the workmen, in broken Russian, "This fellow good; aye, very good!" at which the workmen, in their turn, laughed hugely, but not without pride. "See what our friend is! One of us!" And he really was theirs, and one of them.

Early the next morning there came into Solómin's room his favourite Pável, who woke him, helped him to dress, told him one thing, asked him another. Then they drank tea hurriedly together; and Solómin, putting on his greasy grey working-coat, went off into the factory, and his life began turning again like a great fly-wheel.

But a new interruption was in store. Five days after Solómin's return to his old ways, a handsome phaeton, with four excellent horses, rolled into the yard of the factory, and a footman in a pale-green livery was shown by Pável into the wing, and solemnly handed to Solómin a letter sealed with a crest, "from His Excellency Borís Andréitch Sipiágin." In this letter, which smelt not of perfume—oh, no!—but was impregnated with some subtle and highly elegant English scent, and which, though written in the third person, was not in a secretary's handwriting, but in that of the great man himself, the enlightened proprietor of the village of Arjánœ excused himself for addressing one personally unknown to him. He said that he had heard most flattering reports of Mr. Solómin, and took the liberty of inviting him to his village, where his advice might be of the greatest use to him, Sipiágin, in a certain important commercial undertaking. In the hope of Mr. Solómin's kind consent, he, Sipiágin, had sent his carriage. In the event of Mr. Solómin being unable to leave on that day, he, Sipiágin, begged Mr. Solómin to be so good as to appoint another whenever he chose, when he

would be glad to place the same carriage at Mr. Solómin's disposal. After which came the usual formula ; and at the end of the letter was a postscript in the first person : " I hope that you will not refuse to dine with me *as you are*, in a frock-coat." The words " as you are " were underlined. Together with this letter, the pale-green footman, in some trepidation, as it seemed, handed Solómin another note, not even sealed, but gummed. It was from Nejdánof, and contained these few words : " Please come. You are much wanted here, and may be very useful—not, of course, to Mr. Sipiágin."

As he read Sipiágin's letter, Solómin thought,—

" How could I go except as I am ? I haven't a dress-coat in the place. And why the deuce should I go and waste my time there ? "

But when he read Nejdánof's note, he scratched the back of his head and walked doubtfully to the window.

" What answer do you graciously please to give ? " said the pale-green footman, primly.

Solómin stood a moment longer at the window, and at last, tossing back his hair, passed his hand over his forehead, and said,—

" I will come ; give me time to dress first."

The footman went out in a dignified manner, and Solómin called Pável, said a few words to him, and ran once more into the factory. Then he put on a black frock-coat, very long in the waist, cut by the provincial tailor, and a rather rusty tall hat, which gave his face a wooden appearance, and took his seat in the phaeton, but suddenly remembered that he had no gloves ; so he called the ever-present Pável, who brought him a pair of newly washed white buckskins, each finger of which, flattened out at the end, looked like a biscuit. Solómin thrust these into his pocket, and told them to start. Then the footman sprang on to the box with a sudden and perfectly

unnecessary display of energy ; the well-trained coachman whistled to his horses, and the carriage moved off.

While Solómin was rolling towards Sipiágin's house, that statesman was sitting in his study with a half-cut political pamphlet on his knees, and talking about him to his wife. He confided to her that he had really invited him in order to see whether it was not possible to allure him away from the merchant's factory to his own, which was doing extremely badly, and needed a thorough reformation. Sipiágin rejected the idea that Solómin would not come or would name another day, though he himself in his letter had given him the option.

"But then ours is a paper-mill and his a cotton-spinning factory," remarked Valentína Mikháilovna.

"It is all the same, my dear ; there are machines here and machines there, and he is a mechanician."

"But perhaps he is a specialist!"

"In the first place, my darling, there are no specialists in Russia ; secondly, I repeat, he is a mechanician !"

Valentína Mikháilovna smiled.

"Take care, my dear ; you have been unlucky once with young men ; you might make a second mistake !"

"You mean about Nejdánof ?" But I think I found what I wanted ; he is a good tutor for Kólia. Then you know, *non bis in idem* ! Excuse my pedantry . . . That means that the same danger does not repeat itself."

"Do you think so ? Now I think that everything in the world repeats itself, especially that which is in the nature of things, and especially that which concerns young people."

"Que voulez-vous dire ?" asked Sipiágin, throwing his pamphlet on to the table with an easy gesture.

"Ouvrez les yeux, et vous verrez !" answered

Sipiágina, for of course in French they always said *vous* to one another.

"H'm!" said Sipiágin. "You mean about the student?"

"About the student."

"H'm! Has he got any absurd ideas hereabouts?" (he tapped his forehead with his fingers). "Eh?"

"Open your eyes!"

"Mariánna, eh?" The second "eh?" was more nasal than the first.

"Open your eyes, I tell you!"

Sipiágin frowned.

"Well, we will see about all that by-and-by. I wanted to say one thing to you now. This Solómin will probably not be quite at his ease. Naturally enough; he is not used to society. So we must be as gentle as possible with him, so as not to frighten him. I don't say this for you, you are as good as gold; you can enchant any one you please in a twinkling. J'en sais quelque chose, madame! I mean it for others—for him, for instance . . ."

He pointed to a fashionable grey hat on a stand; it belonged to Kalloméitsef, who had been at Arjánoc since the morning.

"Il est très cassant, you know; he despises the people really too much—an attitude I most strongly blame! Besides which, I have lately remarked in him a kind of pettishness, of vehemence. Are matters there" (Sipiágin waved his head vaguely, but his wife understood) "going on badly—eh?"

"I again say, open your eyes!"

Sipiágin rose.

"Eh?" (this time the "eh?" was quite different in tone and in meaning; it was much deeper). "That is it, is it? In that case I might have to open my eyes too wide!"

"That is your business; as for your young man, if

he comes to-day, do not be alarmed ; every precaution shall be taken."

But it turned out that no measures of precaution were necessary. Solómin was neither confused nor frightened. When the servant announced him, Sipiágin jumped up, and said in a loud tone, so that he could be heard in the hall, "Show him in, of course, show him in!" then walked to the door, and stood just before it. As soon as Solómin crossed the threshold, Sipiágin, over whom he had almost fallen, stretched out both his hands, and with a pleasant smile and bend of the head, exclaimed joyfully, "How kind . . . on your part . . . how much obliged I am!" and led him up to Valentína Mikháilovna.

"This is my wife," he said, laying his hand gently on Solómin's back, and as it were moving him towards her, "and this, my dear, is our great manager and mechanician, Vasíli . . . Fedoséevitch Solómin.

Sipiágina half got up, and raising her eyelashes with a pretty gesture, first smiled kindly at him as an acquaintance, then stretched out her hand with the palm upwards, keeping her elbow close to her side, and bending her head over her arm like a suppliant. Solómin let the husband and wife perform their little tricks on him, shook their hands, and sat down as soon as he was asked. Sipiágin inquired pressingly if he would not take anything? But Solómin answered that he would not, that his journey had not tired him in the least, and that he was entirely at his disposal.

"May I, then, ask you to come to the factory?" exclaimed Sipiágin, as if he were ashamed, and could not venture to believe in such condescension on the part of his guest.

"At once, if you like," answered Solómin.

"How good you are! Shall I order a carriage? or perhaps you would rather go on foot?"

"But your factory is not far, is it?"

"Half a verst, not more."

"Then why have a carriage?"

"As you please. Give me a hat and stick, quick! And do you, my dear, give us a good dinner. My hat!"

Sipiágin was much more excited than his guest. He repeated, "Why don't they bring my hat?" and, starting up, bounced out—he, the great statesman—like a frolicsome schoolboy.

While he and Solómin were talking, Valentína Mikháilovna was looking furtively, but attentively, at this young man of the new generation. He sat quietly in his arm-chair, with his gloveless hands on his knees (he had not put on his gloves after all), and looked calmly, but with a little curiosity, at the furniture and pictures.

"What does it all mean?" she thought. "He is a plebeian, evidently a plebeian, and yet how simply he behaves!"

Solómin really did behave very simply; not like some men, with an affectation of simplicity, as much as to say, "Look at me, and see what a man I am!" but like one whose feelings and ideas are intelligent though not complicated. Sipiágina wished to talk to him, but, to her astonishment, did not at once find anything to say.

"Good Heavens!" she thought, "can it be that I am afraid of this workman?"

"Boris Andréitch should be very much obliged to you," she at length said, "for consenting to sacrifice a part of your valuable time to him."

"It is not very valuable, madam," answered Solómin, "and I shall not stay here very long."

"Voilà où l'ours a montré sa patte," she thought in French; but at that moment her husband appeared at the open door with his hat on and a stick in his hand. Turning half round, he exclaimed jauntily,—

"Vasíli Fedoséitch, I am at your service."

Solómin rose, bowed to Valentína Mikháilovna, and followed Sipiágin.

"This way, this way, Vasíli Fedoséitch!" repeated Sipiágin, as if they were walking over broken ground and Solómin needed a guide. "This way; mind the steps, Vasíli Fedoséitch."

"As you are good enough to call me by my patronymic," said Solómin, slowly, "my name is Fedótitch, not Fedoséitch."

Sipiágin looked back over his shoulder almost as if he were frightened.

"Oh! please excuse me, Vasíli Fedótitch."

"It is of no importance."

They reached the courtyard, where they met Kalloméitsef.

"Where are you going?" he asked, looking askant at Solómin; "to the factory? C'est là l'individu en question?"

Sipiágin opened his eyes wide, and shook his head slightly, as a sign to him to be careful.

"Yes, to the factory . . . to show my sins and shortcomings to this gentleman. Let me introduce you: Mr. Kalloméitsef, a neighbouring landowner, Mr. Solómin . . ."

Kalloméitsef nodded twice almost imperceptibly, not towards Solómin, and without looking at him. Solómin, on the other hand, looked hard at him, and a flash passed through his half-closed eyes.

"May I join you?" asked Kalloméitsef; "you know I like to be instructed."

"Of course you may."

They quitted the court-yard for the road, and before they had gone twenty yards they saw the parish priest, with his robe tucked up, striding off to the so-called "priests' quarters." Kalloméitsef at once left his companions and walked with long, firm strides up

to the priest, who did not in the least expect it and was rather timid, asked his blessing, and kissed his red, moist hand noisily; then, turning to Solómin, threw a defiant glance at him. He had evidently heard something of him, and wanted to show himself off, and "give this scientific adventurer a slap!"

"C'est une manifestation, mon cher?" muttered Sipiágin through his teeth.

Kalloméitsef snorted, "Oui, mon cher, une manifestation nécessaire par le temps qui court!"

On their arrival at the factory they were met by a Little Russian, with an enormous beard and false teeth, who had replaced the former manager, a German, whom Sipiágin had finally dismissed. This Little Russian was only there for the time; it was evident that he knew nothing. He only gave vent to brief ejaculations in his native dialect and perpetual sighs.

They began to inspect the factory. Several of the workmen knew Solómin by sight, and bowed to him. To one he said, "Ah, Grigóri! good morning, are you here?" He was soon convinced that the management was bad. A great deal of money had been spent, and spent recklessly. The machinery was bad in quality; there was a great deal that was superfluous and unnecessary, and much that was really necessary was wanting. Sipiágin occasionally glanced at Solómin's eyes, as if to guess his opinions, and put timid questions, asking whether he was at least satisfied with the order.

"It is orderly enough," answered Solómin; "but is there any profit? I doubt it."

Not only Sipiágin, but Kalloméitsef himself, felt that Solómin was at home in the factory; that everything was familiar and known to him to the smallest detail; that here he was master. He laid his hand on a machine, as a rider would on his horse's neck; he touched a wheel, and it stopped, or began to turn; he

took out of a vat a little of the paste of which paper is made, and it at once showed all its faults. Solómin said little, and did not even look at the bearded Little Russian, and he walked out of the factory in silence. Sipiágin and Kalloméitsef followed him.

Sipiágin ordered that no one should accompany him. He even stamped and ground his teeth : he was evidently very much put out.

"I can see by your face," he turned to Solómin, "that you are not satisfied with my factory, and I am quite aware that it is in an unsatisfactory condition and unprofitable ; but please tell me exactly, and without being afraid of hurting my feelings, what are its chief defects ? And what ought I to do to improve it ?"

"The manufacture of paper is not in my line," answered Solómin, "but one thing I can tell you : productive industries are not suited to the nobility."

"You think these pursuits lowering to the nobility ?" broke in Kalloméitsef.

Solómin smiled his usual broad smile.

"Oh, no ! not in the least ! What is there lowering in them ? And if there were, the nobility would not mind."

"How ? What do you mean, sir ?"

"I only mean," continued Solómin, calmly, "that nobles are not used to that sort of business. Here you need the commercial spirit ; everything has to be managed differently ; economy is necessary. The nobles do not understand that. So you see all over the place they have established cloth factories and paper-mills, and so on ; and into whose hands do they fall in the end ? Into those of the merchants. It is a pity, for the merchant is simply a leech, but it cannot be helped."

"To listen to you," shouted Kalloméitsef, "one

would think that the nobles are incapable of understanding any financial question !”

“ Oh, on the contrary, they are first-rate in them. To obtain a concession for a railway, to start a bank, to intrigue for some monopoly, or anything of the sort, there is no one like a noble ! They make large fortunes in that way. It was that I was hinting at when you were pleased to be angry. But I was thinking of genuine commercial undertakings ; I say genuine because such operations as establishing their own taverns, or those little shops which do business by barter, or lending peasants corn and money at a hundred and a hundred and fifty per cent., as many noble proprietors do now, I cannot count as genuine financial business.”

Kalloméitsef made no answer. He himself belonged to that very class of pawnbroking landowners whom Markélof had mentioned in his last conversation with Nejdánof, and he was all the more inhumane in his demands because he had no personal dealings with the peasants—could he be expected to admit them into his sweet-smelling study furnished in European style!—but communicated with them through a clerk. As he listened to Solómin’s slow and almost indifferent speech, he felt his bile rising ; but he managed to remain silent this time, and it was only the play of the muscles of his cheeks as his jaws tightened which showed what a struggle was going on within.

“ But excuse me, excuse me, Vasfli Fedótitch,” said Sipiágin, “ all the opinions that you are expressing were perfectly just in former times, when the nobles enjoyed quite different rights and were generally in a different position. But now, after all these beneficial reforms, in this industrial age, why should not the nobility direct their attention, their abilities in short, to such undertakings ? Why should they be

unable to master that which a simple merchant, often totally uneducated, can master? They do not suffer from the want of education, and one may even affirm with confidence that they are to a certain extent the representatives of enlightenment and progress!"

Borís Andréitch spoke very well; his eloquence would have produced a great effect in Petersburg, in his department, or even higher, but on Solómin it did not have the smallest effect.

"The nobles cannot manage such matters," he repeated.

"But why? why?" almost shrieked Kalloméitsef.

"Why! Because after all they are nothing but officials!"

"Officials!" Kalloméitsef laughed satirically. "You probably do not quite realize, Mr. Solómin, what you are talking about?"

Solómin continued to smile. "What makes you think so, Mr. Koloméntsof?" (Kalloméitsef positively shuddered on hearing such a mutilation of his name). "You are wrong. I always realize what I am saying."

"Then explain what you meant by that phrase!"

"I meant this: according to me, every official is an alien, and always was, and now the noble has become an alien."

Kalloméitsef laughed more than ever.

"Excuse me, my dear sir, but I do not understand you in the least!"

"So much the worse for you. Exert yourself, and perhaps you will succeed."

"Sir!"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," said Sipiágin, hurriedly, as if seeking some heavenly intervention with his eyes, "please be quiet. . . . Kalloméitzeff, je vous prie de vous calmer. And dinner, I suppose, will soon be ready. Pray follow me, gentlemen!"

“Valentína Mikháilovna!” exclaimed Kalloméitsef, rushing into her study five minutes after. “Your husband is really committing unpardonable absurdities. You have already one Nihilist in the house; now he has found another! And this one is worse!”

“How so?”

“Why, he promulgates the devil knows what doctrines; and please take note of this: he talked a whole hour with your husband, and not once, *not once* did he call him ‘Your Excellency!’ Le vagabond!”

CHAPTER XXIV.

BEFORE dinner Sipiágin called his wife aside into the library. He wanted to speak to her in private. He seemed perturbed, and told her that the factory was undoubtedly doing badly, and that Solómin gave him the impression of being an intelligent man, though a little abrupt, and that they ought to continue to be aux petits soins with him.

"What a thing it would be to have him!" he repeated twice.

Kalloméitsef's presence annoyed him greatly.

"Deuce take him! Sees Nihilists everywhere, and will not rest till he has exterminated them! He might stay at home and exterminate them! Can't keep a civil tongue in his head!"

Valentína Mikháilovna remarked that she would be delighted to be aux petits soins with the stranger; but she thought that he did not care for these same petits soins, and paid no attention to them; not that he was rude, but curiously indifferent, which was very remarkable in a man du commun.

"All the same, do your best," begged Sipiágin.

Valentína Mikháilovna promised to do her best—and did it. She began by having an interview—en tête-à-tête—with Kalloméitsef. What she said to him is not known, but he appeared at table with the air of

a man who has taken a pledge to be peaceful and quiet whatever he may hear. This timely resignation threw over his whole person a shade of gentle sorrow; but what dignity—oh, what dignity—there was in every movement! Valentína Mikháilovna introduced Solómin to all the inmates of the house (he looked at Mariánna more attentively than at the others), and at table made him sit at her right hand. Kalloméitsef sat on her left. As he spread out his napkin he smiled and shrugged his shoulders, as much as to say, “Now for our little farce!” Sipiágin, who was sitting opposite, looked at him somewhat uneasily. By this new arrangement Nejdánof found himself no longer next Mariánna, but between Anna Zakhárovna and Sipiágin. Mariánna found her name (as the dinner was a formal one) on a napkin between the places of Kalloméitsef and Kólia. The dinner was admirably put on table; there was even a menu—a neatly engraved card lay before each plate. Directly after the soup, Sipiágin again turned the conversation on to his factory, and on Russian manufactures generally. Solómin, as his way was, answered very briefly. As soon as he spoke Mariánna turned her eyes on to him. Kalloméitsef, who sat next her, addressed her various compliments, as he had been asked not to excite a polemical discussion, but she did not listen to him; and in truth he uttered his compliments in an indifferent manner, as if merely to satisfy his conscience; he felt that between that young girl and himself there was an impassable barrier.

As to Nejdánof, his relations with the host had suddenly become even worse than before. Sipiágin seemed to look upon him as a piece of furniture, or an airy space, which he simply and absolutely ignored. This new attitude became defined so rapidly and unmistakably that when during dinner Nejdánof happened to say a few words in answer to a remark

of his neighbour, Anna Zakhárovna, Sipiágin looked round with astonishment, as if asking himself "Whence proceeds this sound?"

It was evident that Sipiágin possessed some of the qualities which distinguish people of high rank in Russia.

After the fish, Valentína Mikháilovna, who on her side was expending all her charms and allurements on her right-hand neighbour, Solómin, remarked in English across the table to Sipiágin, "Our guest does not drink wine, perhaps he would like beer." Sipiágin called loudly for ale, while Solómin, turning quietly to Valentína Mikháilovna, said, "I suppose, madam, you are not aware that I spent upwards of two years in England, and know and understand English; and this I tell you in case you may wish to say anything private in my presence." Valentína Mikháilovna laughed, and began to assure him that his warning was unnecessary, as he would hear nothing but what was favourable of himself; she thought Solómin's act a little strange, but in its way delicate.

Kalloméitsef at last could not restrain himself.

"Now, you have been in England," he said, "and have probably studied the customs of that country. Let me ask you, do you think them worthy of imitation or not?"

"In some ways, yes; in others, the reverse."

"Short, and by no means clear," remarked Kalloméitsef, wilfully ignoring the signs which Sipiágin was making to him. "You were talking about the nobility to-day. Of course you had an opportunity of studying on the spot what is called in England 'landed gentry'?"

"No, I had no such opportunity; I lived among quite a different class, but I formed some idea of that class of gentlemen."

"Well, do you think that such a 'landed gentry' is

impossible here? Or anyhow that it would not be desirable?"

"Firstly, I do think it would be impossible, and in the second place it is not worth wishing for."

"And why not, my dear sir?" said Kalloméitsef. This "my dear sir" was meant to have a calming effect on Sipiágin, who was very uneasy, and was beginning to wriggle on his chair.

"Because in twenty or thirty years your 'landed gentry' in any case would have ceased to exist."

"But excuse me, sir, why so?"

"Because by then the land will belong to proprietors without any distinction of birth."

"To merchants, sir?"

"Probably largely to merchants."

"How so?"

"Simply because they will buy the land."

"From the nobility?"

"From the nobility."

Kalloméitsef smiled condescendingly. "I remember you said the same thing about works and factories. And now you include the whole land."

"Now I include the whole land."

"And you will probably be greatly pleased at the result."

"Not in the least, as I have already told you. The people will suffer none the less."

Kalloméitsef raised one hand a little. "What remarkable sympathy for the people, when one comes to think of it!"

"Vasfli Fedótitch!" called Sipiágin, at the top of his voice. "They have brought the beer. Voyons, Siméon," he added in a lower tone.

But Kalloméitsef was not to be stopped.

"I see," he continued, turning to Solómin, "your opinion of the merchants is not a very high one; but do they not belong by birth to the people?"

"And what if they do?"

"I had imagined that you considered everything connected with the people admirable."

"Oh, no! You were quite mistaken. Our lower classes have many faults, though they are not always to blame for them. The merchant up to the present time is a beast of prey, and grasps even his own wealth like a beast of prey. What is to be done? You are robbed—and you rob. As for the people . . ."

"Well, the people?" asked Kalloméitsef shrilly.

"The people—is a dormouse."

"And you would wish to wake it?"

"It would not be a bad thing."

"Oh, that is what . . ."

"Allow me," said Sipiágin, majestically.

He understood that the moment had arrived when it was necessary to put a limit to this, to stop it. And this limit he put. He stopped them. He placed his right elbow on the table, and waving his hand, commenced a long and comprehensive speech. On the one hand he praised the conservatives, on the other the liberals, giving the latter slightly the preference, and proclaiming his adhesion to their ranks; he exalted the people, but pointed out some of its weak points; expressed his full confidence in the Government, but asked himself whether *all* those who were in authority under it fulfilled the noble task which it sketched out for them? He acknowledged the value and importance of literature, but said that without the greatest care it was impossible! He glanced at the West with joy mingled with doubt; he glanced at the East with satisfaction mingled with enthusiasm! He ended by proposing a toast in honour of the triple alliance, 'Religion, agriculture, and commerce!'

"Under the ægis of the Government," added Kalloméitsef, severely.

"Under the ægis of a wise and benevolent Government," corrected Sipiágin.

The toast was drunk in silence. The airy space on Sipiágin's left called Nejdánof emitted, it is true, a sound of disapprobation ; but as it attracted no attention, it again subsided, and the dinner came to a satisfactory end, undisturbed by any further discussions.

Valentína Mikháilovna gave Solómin a cup of coffee with her most charming smile ; he drank it, and began to look round uneasily for his hat, but found himself gently taken by the arm and led off to Sipiágin's study. There he received, first, an admirable cigar, secondly, a proposition to come to Sipiágin's factory on the most favourable terms.

"You will be entire master, Vasíli Fedótitch, entire master !"

Solómin took the cigar and refused the proposition ; and he maintained his refusal in spite of all Sipiágin's entreaties.

"Do not say 'No' at once, my dear sir ! Give yourself till to-morrow at least to think it over !"

"But it will be all the same. I cannot accept your proposition."

"Till to-morrow, Vasíli Fedótitch. It makes no difference to you."

Solómin agreed that it made no difference to him, but nevertheless left the study, and again began looking for his hat. But Nejdánof, who up to that time had not found an opportunity of exchanging a single word with him, came up and whispered hurriedly,—

"For Heaven's sake do not go away, or we shall not be able to speak to each other !"

So Solómin left his hat alone. For besides this Sipiágin, noticing his hesitating movements up and down the drawing-room, exclaimed,—

"Of course you sleep here ?"

"As you wish," answered Solómin.

The grateful look which Mariánna, who was standing at the window, gave him made him thoughtful.

CHAPTER XXV.

BEFORE seeing Solómin Mariánna had drawn quite a different picture of him in her mind. At the first glance he appeared to her an undefined being, wanting in individuality. She had seen so many of these fair-haired, sinewy-handed, rawboned men in her life. But the more she looked at him, the more she listened to his words, the stronger grew within her a feeling of confidence—of real confidence. This tranquil man, heavy rather than clumsy, was incapable of lying or boasting; more than that, one could lean on him as against a stone wall. He would not betray you; nay, far more, he would sympathize and support. Mariánna also thought that not she alone, but all who were present, had the same feeling with regard to Solómin. She paid no particular attention to what he said; all the talk about merchants and factories was of little interest to her, but the way he spoke, the way he looked and smiled when speaking, pleased her greatly.

He was a truthful man! That was the main point; that was what touched her. It is a well-known, if not quite intelligible, fact; Russians lie more than any nation in the world; but there is nothing they esteem so much as truth, nothing for which they have such sympathy. Besides which in Mariánna's eyes Solómin

had an especial interest ; on his head rested the halo of glory of being one of those whom Vasíli Niko-láevitch himself recommended to his followers.

During dinner Mariáanna several times glanced at Nejdánof with reference to something Solómin had said, and finally caught herself making an involuntary comparison between the two, and not in Nejdánof's favour. It is true that Nejdánof's features were much handsomer and pleasanter than Solómin's, but his face expressed a mixture of various uneasy feelings—annoyance, confusion, impatience, even unhappiness. He sat as if on needles, sometimes commenced speaking, and broke off again at once with a nervous laugh. Whereas Solómin gave the impression of being perfectly at home, though he might find it a little dull, and that what he felt did not in the least depend on what others felt.

"I must really ask that man his advice," thought Mariáanna ; "he is sure to say something useful."

It was she who sent Nejdánof to him after dinner.

The evening passed monotonously enough. Luckily dinner had finished late, and there was not long to wait before night. Kalloméitsef was sulking in polite silence.

"What is the matter ?" asked Sipiágina, half in joke. "Have you lost anything ?"

"That is exactly it," said Kalloméitsef. "It is said that a general in the Guard complained that his soldiers had lost the cap of their shoes. 'Find me my cap,' he said. So I say, 'Find me my "s, i, r." The "s, i, r"' has gone, and with it all respect and discipline."

Sipiágina informed Kalloméitsef that she should not help him in his searches.

Encouraged by the success of his speech at dinner, Sipiágin made two more, in which he propounded various statesmanlike theories on certain necessary

measures. He also let drop a few epigrams—*des mots*—not brilliant so much as weighty, which he had prepared especially for Petersburg. One of these epigrams he even repeated, prefacing it with the words, “If I may thus express myself.” He had said of one of the ministers of the day that his mind was weak and fickle, and sought after chimerical objects. On the other hand Sipiágin, remembering that he had to do with a Russian, one of the people, did not omit to drag in certain expressions which were meant to show that he himself was a pure-bred Russian—not merely a Russian citizen—and that he was deeply acquainted with the inmost life of the people. Thus, on Kallo-méitsef remarking that the rain might interfere with the hay crop, he answered, “If the hay is black, the buckwheat will be white.” He also brought in such phrases as “Merchandise, without the merchant, is an orphan”; “Measure thrice, cut once”; “If you have corn, you will find a bushel to put it in”; “If on St. George’s Day the birch-leaf is the size of a farthing, on the feast of Our Lady of Kazan, you will have corn in the barn.” Sometimes, indeed, he would become confused, and let slip such expressions as these—“Every curlew to its own pole,” or “It is the corners which make a cottage bright.” But the society in which these misfortunes happened seldom suspected that their good friend, the pure-bred Russian, had made a slip, and, thanks to Prince Kovriákin, it was used to such enormities in Russian.

All these proverbs and sayings Sipiágin uttered in a peculiarly hearty, nay even hoarse voice, *d’une voix rustique*. Such sayings, when produced at the right time and place in Petersburg, caused important and influential ladies to exclaim,—

“Comme il connait bien les mœurs de notre peuple!” and important and influential dignitaries added, “Les mœurs et les besoins!”

Valentína Mikháilovna was most attentive to Solómin, but the evident insuccess of her efforts discouraged her, and once, passing near Kalloméitsef, she involuntarily exclaimed, in a low tone,—

“ Mon Dieu, que je me sens fatiguée ! ”

Whereon Kalloméitsef responded, with an ironical bow,—

“ Tu l’as voulu, Georges Dandin ! ”

At last, after the usual outburst of compliments and pretty speeches which takes place at the breaking-up of a party which has been very dull,—after the handshakings, the smiles, the friendly ejaculations,—the worn-out hosts separated from their equally worn-out guests.

Solómin, who had been put into perhaps the best room on the first floor, with an English washing-stand and a bath-room, went off to find Nejdánof.

The latter began by thanking him warmly for consenting to stay.

“ I know,” he said, “ that you are making a sacrifice. ” . . .

“ How so ? ” said Solómin, quietly. “ It is no sacrifice. And in any case I could not refuse you. ”

“ Why not ? ”

“ Because I have taken a great fancy to you. ”

Nejdánof was both astonished and pleased, and Solómin shook his hand cordially. Then he sat down across a chair, lighted a cigar, and, resting both his elbows on the back of the chair, said,—

“ Now tell me what is the matter. ”

Nejdánof also sat down across a chair in front of Solómin, but did not light a cigar.

“ You ask what the matter is ; the matter is that I want to fly from here. ”

“ You mean that you want to leave this house. Well, why not ? ”

“ Not to leave it, but to fly from it. ”

"But can they prevent you? Perhaps you have taken money in advance? In that case you have only a word to say. . . . I shall be delighted. . . ."

"You do not understand me, my dear Solómin. I said 'to fly from,' and not 'to leave,' because I shall not quit the house—alone."

Solómin raised his head.

"With whom, then?"

"With that girl whom you saw to-day."

"With her? She has a good face. Do you love one another, or have you only determined to leave the house together because you are neither of you happy?"

"We love one another."

"Ah!" Solómin paused. "She is a relation of the people here?"

"Yes; but she fully shares our opinions, and is ready for anything."

Solómin smiled.

"And are you ready, Nejdánof?"

Nejdánof frowned slightly.

"Why do you ask? I will show you, when the time comes, that I am ready."

"I do not doubt you, Nejdánof. I only asked because I fancy no one is ready but you."

"And Markélof?"

"Yes, perhaps Markélof; but he, I should think, was born ready."

At this moment some one knocked lightly and hurriedly at the door, and opened it without awaiting an answer. It was Mariánna. She went straight up to Solómin.

"I am certain," she began, "that you will not be astonished at seeing me here at this hour. He" (Mariánna pointed at Nejdánof) "will of course have told you everything. Give me your hand, and let me tell you that before you stands an honest girl."

“I am sure of it,” said Solómin, gravely. He had risen from his chair on Mariánna’s entrance. “At dinner-time I was looking at you, and thinking, ‘What honest eyes that young lady has!’ Nejdánof has told me of your intention; but what is your actual reason for flying?”

“What? The work with which I sympathize—do not be astonished, Nejdánof has concealed nothing from me—that work will soon be beginning; and am I to remain in the house of a landowner, where all is lies and deceit? Those whom I love will be in danger, and I”

Solómin stopped her by a motion of his hand.

“Do not excite yourself. Sit down, and Nejdánof and I will do the same. Listen: if you have no other reason than that, you need not fly from here. The work will not begin so soon as you imagine. Some prudence is necessary. You must not rush forward headlong, believe me.”

Mariánna sat down and flung round her a large plaid which she had on her shoulders.

“But I cannot stay here any longer! Every one here insults me. To-day again, before Kólia, that stupid Anna Zakhárovna said, hinting at my father, that the apple never falls far from the parent tree! Kólia was astonished, and asked what she meant? As for Valentína Mikháilovna, I do not mention her!”

Solómin stopped her again, and this time with a smile. Mariánna understood that he was laughing at her a little, but his smile could never offend any one.

“Well, my dear young lady! I do not know who your Anna Zakhárovna may be, or of what apple-tree you are speaking, but, really, a stupid woman says a stupid word, and you cannot bear that? How do you mean to live? For the whole world is made up of stupid people! No, that is not a reason. Is there anything else?”

"I am certain," broke in Nejdánof in a hollow voice, "that from one moment to another Sipiágin may dismiss me. Something must have been reported to him. He treats me in the most contemptuous manner."

Solómin turned to Nejdánof. "Then why run away, if they mean to dismiss you?"

Nejdánof did not at the moment know what to answer.

"I have already told you" he began.

"He used that word," broke in Mariánna, "because I am going with him."

Solómin looked at her and shook his head good-naturedly.

"Just so, my dear young lady; but I repeat, if you are really thinking of leaving this house because you imagine the revolution is going to break out directly"

"That is the very reason we wrote to you to come," interrupted Mariánna, "to know for certain in what position matters stand."

"In that case," continued Solómin, "I say again you may sit at home for some time yet. But if you want to fly because you love one another, and cannot be united otherwise why then"

"Well, what then?"

"Then it only remains for me to wish you, as in the days of old, love and counsel, and if need be, and it is in my power, to give you actual help. Because I have liked you, my dear lady—and him too—from the first glance, as if we had been akin."

Mariánna and Nejdánof went up to him, one on each side, and took each a hand.

"Only tell us what to do," said Mariánna. "Admitting that the revolution is yet far off, still there is the preparatory work, the labour which in this house, in our situation, is impossible; we are so eager to

assist, if you will show us the way. You only tell us where to go Send us out! You will send us out, will you not?"

"Whither?"

"Among the people! where else?"

"Into the forest," thought Nejdánof, remembering one of Páklin's phrases.

Solómin looked intently at Mariánna.

"You want to study the people?"

"Yes; that is, not only to study the people, but to act, to work for them."

"Good; you shall study them, I promise you. I will give you the opportunity of acting, of working for them. And you, Nejdánof, are you ready to go—with her—and for them?"

"Of course, I am ready," he answered quickly. He remembered another expression of Páklin. "'Jagernaut!' Here it comes, the mighty chariot," he thought, "and I hear the crash and the roll of its wheels."

"Good," repeated Solómin, thoughtfully. "And when do you mean to fly?"

"To-morrow, if you like," exclaimed Mariánna.

"Very well, but whither?"

"Hush lower " whispered Nejdánof. "There is some one walking about the passage."

There was a silence. "Where do you mean to go?" again asked Solómin, lowering his voice.

"We do not know," answered Mariánna.

Solómin turned his eyes to Nejdánof, but the latter only shook his head negatively.

Solómin stretched out his hand and snuffed the candle cautiously.

"Listen, my children," he said, after a pause. "Come to me at the factory. It is not pretty there, but it is safe. I will hide you. I have a room where no one will find you. If you can reach it we will not give

you up. You may say there are a great many people there. In that lies its advantage; for where there are many people it is easy to hide. What say you?"

"We can but thank you," said Nejdánof, while Mariánna, whom the idea of the factory had at first rather alarmed, added warmly, "Of course, of course! How kind you are! But you will not let us stay there long? You will send us out?"

"That depends on yourselves. And in case you wanted to be married, the factory is convenient for that too. I have a neighbour close by, a cousin of mine, a priest, by name Zósima, a most obliging man. He will marry you in a twinkling."

Mariánna smiled to herself; Nejdánof again grasped Solómin's hand, and after a moment added,—

"And your master, by the way, the proprietor of the factory, will he not be angry? Might he not give you some trouble?"

Solómin glanced sideways at Nejdánof.

"Do not be uneasy about me. There is not the least fear. If only the factory goes on all right, he is absolutely indifferent to all the rest. And you need not be afraid of the workmen. Only let me know when to expect you."

Nejdánof and Mariánna interchanged looks.

"The day after to-morrow, early in the morning, or a day later," said Nejdánof, after a moment. "We cannot delay any longer. At any moment they may dismiss me from the house."

"Very well," said Solómin, rising from his chair; "I will expect you every morning. And I will not leave the place for a week. Every necessary precaution shall be taken."

Mariánna, who had turned toward the door, came back to him.

"Good-bye, my dear, good friend Vasíli Fedótitch. Is not that your name?"

"Yes."

"Good-bye, till we meet again! And thank you, thank you."

"Good-bye. Good night, my dear lady."

"Good night, Nejdánof, till to-morrow . . ." she added, and went out quickly.

The two young men stood for a few moments motionless and silent.

"Nejdánof . . ." at length began Solómin, but paused. "Nejdánof," he again said, "tell me what you can about that girl. What has her life been till now? who is she? why is she here?"

Nejdánof briefly told Solómin all he knew; the latter listening attentively.

"Nejdánof . . ." he said, "you ought to take loving care of that girl; for if . . . anything . . . were to . . . you would have a heavy responsibility to bear. Good night."

He went out; and Nejdánof stood for a few moments in the centre of the room, and then murmuring, "Oh, it is better not to think of it," threw himself face downwards on his bed.

Mariánna, on returning to her room, found on the table a little note, running as follows,—

"I am sorry for you. You are ruining yourself. Think what you are doing; into what a gulf you are rushing blindfold. For what or for whom?—V."

The room was perfumed with a delicate and peculiar scent; it was evident that Valentína Mikháilovna had but just left it. Mariánna took up a pen and wrote underneath,—

"Do not pity me. God knows which of us is the more worthy of pity. I only know that I should not like to be in your place.—M."

She left the note on the table, not doubting but that her answer would fall into Valentína Mikháilovna's hands.

The next morning Solómin, after seeing Nejdánof, and definitively refusing the management of Sipiágin's paper-mill, started homewards. His thoughts occupied him the whole way, which rarely happened with him, for the swing of a carriage generally made him rather dreamy. He thought of Mariánna, of Nejdánof; it seemed to him that if he had been in love he would have spoken and looked differently. "But," he then thought, "as that has never happened to me, I do not know what I should look like." He remembered an Irish girl whom he had once seen behind the counter of a shop; he remembered what lovely hair she had, almost black, and what deep-blue eyes, with thick eyelashes, how inquiringly and sorrowfully she looked at him, and how he walked for a long time up and down the street before the shop-windows, and excitedly asked himself whether he should make her acquaintance or not. He was then in London for a few days only; his employer had sent him there with money to make some purchases. Solómin was on the point of stopping in London, of sending the money back to his employer, so strong was the impression the lovely Polly had produced on him (he had learnt her name by hearing one of her companions call her). However, he conquered himself and went back to his employer. Polly was more beautiful than Mariánna, but the latter had the same inquiring and sad look, and she was a Russian

"But what am I doing?" muttered Solómin to himself. "Thinking of other people's betrothed!" And he shook the collar of his cloak, as if he wished to throw off all needless thoughts. At this moment he drove up to the factory, and on the threshold of his rooms appeared the figure of the faithful Pável.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SOLÓMIN'S refusal had greatly annoyed Sipiágin, who suddenly discovered that this home-bred Stephenson was, after all, not such a remarkable mechanician, and that possibly he was, if not overrating himself, at all events giving himself airs, like a genuine plebeian.

"All these Russians, when once they think that they know something, are unbearable! Au fond, Kalloméitsef is right!"

Under the influence of such unpleasant and irritable feelings, the statesman en herbe looked at Nejdánof even more coldly and unsympathizingly than before. He told Kólia that he need not take his lessons to-day; that he must accustom himself to working alone. However, he did not dismiss Nejdánof, as the latter expected; he merely continued to ignore him. But Valentína Mikháilovna did not ignore Mariánna. A terrible scene passed between them.

A couple of hours before dinner they somehow found themselves alone in the drawing-room. They both felt at once that the moment of the inevitable conflict had arrived; and so, after an instant's hesitation, they walked slowly towards each other. Valentína Mikháilovna was smiling slightly. Mariánna had her lips firmly closed. Both were pale. As she walked

across the room, Valentína Mikháilovna looked to the right, then to the left, then tore off a leaf of geranium Mariánna's eyes were fixed on the smiling face which was approaching.

Sipiágina was the first to stop ; and, tapping the back of a chair with her fingers, she said in a careless tone,—

“Mariánna Vikéntievna, I think that we are corresponding with one another. As we live under the same roof, that is rather peculiar ; and you know I am not partial to eccentricities.”

“It was not I who began the correspondence, Valentína Mikháilovna.”

“Yes, you are right. I, for once, was to blame in that eccentricity. Only I saw no other way of awakening in you the feeling—how shall I say ?—the feeling of”

“Speak openly, Valentína Mikháilovna. Do not stand upon ceremony. You need not mind hurting me.”

“The feeling, then, of propriety.”

Valentína Mikháilovna paused ; and no sound was heard in the room but the gentle tapping of her fingers on the chair.

“In what do you consider that I have behaved with impropriety ?” asked Mariánna.

Valentína Mikháilovna shrugged her shoulders.

“Ma chère, vous n'êtes plus une enfant, and you understand me perfectly. Do you imagine that your doings can have remained a secret for me, for Anna Zakhárovna, for any one in the house ? You did not even care that they should remain a secret. You simply braved every one. Borís Andréitch is perhaps the only person who has not paid attention to them. He is occupied by more interesting and important matters. But, except him, every one knows your conduct—every one !”

Mariánna grew paler and paler.

"I would ask you, Valentína Mikháilovna, to define your meaning more clearly. What is it exactly with which you are displeased?"

"L'insolente!" thought Sipiágina, but restrained herself.

"You wish to know what I am displeased with, Mariánna? Well, I am displeased with your long interviews with a young man who by birth, by education, and by position in society is placed below you. I am displeased—no! the word is not strong enough—I am revolted at your late, your night visits to this same man. And where does this happen? Under my roof! Or do you imagine that this should be so, and that I ought to be silent, and, as it were, shelter your light conduct? As an honest woman Oui, mademoiselle, je l'ai été, je le suis, et le serai toujours!—I cannot but feel indignant!"

Valentína Mikháilovna threw herself into a chair, as if overpowered by the weight of her indignation.

Mariánna, for the first time, gave a slight sneer.

"I do not doubt your honesty—past, present, or future," she began; "and this I say quite sincerely. But you are angry without reason. I have not brought any disgrace upon your roof. The man at whom you hint, and whom I do indeed love"

"You love Monsieur Nejdánof?"

"I do."

Valentína Mikháilovna sat up in her chair.

"But just think, Mariánna! He is a student, without birth or family. . . . He is younger than you!" She pronounced the last words with a kind of spiteful joy. "What can come of it? And what have you, a clever woman, found in him? After all, he is but an insignificant boy."

"That was not always your opinion of him, Valentína Mikháilovna."

"Oh, my dear, please leave me out of the question. *Pas tant d'esprit que ça, je vous prie.* This matter concerns you and your future. Just think, what sort of a match would it be for you?"

"I confess, Valentína Mikháilovna, that I was not thinking of a match."

"How? What? How am I to understand you? Allowing that you followed the promptings of your heart, . . . still this must finish in a marriage."

"I do not know. . . . I was not thinking of that?"

"You were not thinking of that? But have you gone mad?"

Mariánna turned away a little.

"We had better stop this conversation, Valentína Mikháilovna. It cannot lead to anything. We shall not be able to understand each other."

Valentína Mikháilovna rose abruptly.

"I cannot, I must not stop this conversation! It is too important! I am answerable for you before . . ." Valentína Mikháilovna was going to say, "before God"; but she stopped herself, and said, "before the whole world! I cannot remain silent when I hear such folly! And why should I be unable to understand you? How unbearably proud these young people are! No I understand you very well. I understand that you are impregnated with these new ideas, which will certainly lead you to ruin! But then it will be too late."

"Possibly; but be sure that even were we perishing we should not stretch out a finger to you to save us!"

Valentína Mikháilovna clasped her hands.

"Again that pride, that unbearable pride! Come, listen, Mariánna, listen to me," she added, suddenly changing her tone. She wished to draw Mariánna to her, but the latter stepped back. "*Ecoutez-moi, je vous en conjure.* After all I am not such an old

woman, I am not so stupid as to make it impossible to get on with me! Je ne suis pas une encroûtée! When I was young, people thought me a Republican, as much as they do you! Listen: I will not conceal my thoughts; I never felt a mother's tenderness for you, nor is it in your nature to regret that. But I knew, and I still know, that I have duties towards you, and I have always endeavoured to fulfil them. Perhaps the marriage which I was dreaming for you—to bring about which Borís Andréitch and I would have thought no sacrifice too great . . . perhaps it did not quite answer to your ideal, but from the depth of my heart . . .”

Mariánna looked at Valentína Mikháilovná, at the lovely eyes, at the pink, slightly touched-up lips, the white hands, the extended fingers adorned with rings, which the elegant lady was so expressively clasping to the bosom of her silk dress . . . and suddenly interrupted her.

“‘Marriage,’ do you say, Valentína Mikháilovna? Do you call that a marriage, with that heartless, vile friend of yours, Mr. Kalloméitsef?”

Valentína Mikháilovna removed her hand from her dress.

“Yes, Mariánna Vikéntievna, I mean Mr. Kalloméitsef, that well-educated, excellent young man, who will certainly make his wife happy, and whom a woman must be mad to refuse! Yes, mad!”

“What is to be done, ma tante? I suppose I am mad!”

“Why, seriously, what fault have you to find with him?”

“Oh, none! I simply despise him, that is all!”

Valentína Mikháilovna shook her head impatiently and sank into her armchair again.

“Let us leave that alone. Retournons à nos moutons. So you love Nejdánof?”

“Yes.”

“And intend to continue your . . . your interviews with him?”

“Yes; I do.”

“And if I forbid you?”

“I shall not obey you.”

Valentína Mikháilovna half sprang from her chair.

“You will not obey me, eh? Oh! And she who tells me this is a girl whose benefactress I have been, whom I have brought up in my house; she who dares to say this is . . .”

“The daughter of a dishonoured father,” interrupted Mariánna, gloomily; “go on, do not stand upon ceremony!”

“Cen’est pas moi qui vous le fait dire, mademoiselle! But at any rate you cannot be proud of that! A girl who eats my bread . . .”

“Do not reproach me with your hospitality, Valentína Mikháilovna! It would cost you more to have a governess for Kólia, for it is I who give him his lessons in French!”

Valentína Mikháilovna raised the hand in which she was holding a cambric handkerchief, embroidered with an enormous white monogram in one corner, scented with ylang-ylang, and tried to say something, but Mariánna continued impetuously,—

“You would be right, a thousand times right, if instead of all that you have just enumerated, all those fleeting benefits and sacrifices, you were able to say, ‘The girl whom I have loved.’ . . . But you are honourable enough not to tell such a falsehood as that!” Mariánna was trembling as if she were in a fever. “You have always hated me. Even now, in the depths of your heart, of which you spoke a minute ago, you are glad—yes, glad that I am bearing out what you always predicted, that I am covering myself

with shame and disgrace, and the only thing at which you are displeased is that a certain share of this disgrace will fall on your aristocratic, honourable house”

“You are insulting me,” stammered Valentína Mikháilovna: “please leave the room!”

But now Mariánna had lost all control over herself.

“Your house, you have said, all your house, Anna Zakhárovna and all, know of my conduct, and they are all horrified and indignant But do I want anything from you, from them, from all these people? Do I care for their opinion? Is not that same bread of yours bitter? What poverty should I not prefer to these riches? Between your house and me is there not a gulf, a great gulf, which nothing, nothing can close? Cannot you—for you, too, are a clever woman—cannot you understand this? And if you feel hatred towards me, do not you comprehend the feeling I have towards you, and which I do not name only because it is too evident?”

“Sortez, sortez, vous dis-je!” repeated Valentína Mikháilovna, stamping her pretty little foot.

Mariánna took a step towards the door.

“I will relieve you of my presence in a moment; but do you know, Valentína Mikháilovna, they say that Rachel herself in Racine’s ‘Bayazet’ could not manage that ‘sortez,’ and how should you? And one thing more, what was it you said? oh, yes, ‘Je suis une honnête femme, je l’ai été et le serai toujours!’ Well, just imagine! I am quite sure that I am a great deal more honest than you. Good-bye.”

Mariánna left the room hurriedly, while Valentína Mikháilovna sprang from her chair, hardly knowing whether to call out or to cry But she did not know what to call, and her tears did not obey her. So she contented herself with using her handkerchief as a fan, but the scent it spread excited her nerves

still more. She felt unhappy—injured . . . She knew that there was a certain amount of truth in that which she had just heard. But how was it possible to judge her so harshly ?

“I cannot be so wicked as that,” she thought, and looked at herself in the glass which stood before her between the windows. The glass reflected a beautiful face, now rather disfigured by red patches, but still charming, and lovely soft velvety eyes. “I—I wicked?” she again thought, “with such eyes !”

At that moment her husband came in, and she again hid her face in her handkerchief.

“What is the matter ?” he asked, tenderly. “What is it, Vália ?” He had invented this diminutive of her name, which, however, he only permitted himself to use in the most absolutely private tête-à-tête, and, even then rather in the country than in Petersburg.

At first she denied that there was anything the matter, but ended by turning round on her chair very prettily and touchingly, and throwing her arms round his shoulders as he stood bending over her. She hid her face in his waistcoat and told him everything ; without any dissimulation or afterthought she endeavoured, if not to justify Mariánna, at all events to excuse her to some extent. She threw the blame on her youth, her passionate nature, the shortcomings of her early education, and also, without any afterthought, she blamed herself.

“This would never have happened to a daughter of mine ; I would have taken better care of her than this.”

Sipiágin listened to the end with benevolence and sympathy, yet with severity ; remained stooping till she unclasped her hands and withdrew her head, called her an angel, kissed her forehead, and announcing that he now knew what course of action his

position as master of the house must dictate to him, departed with the air of a humane but energetic man, who has to fulfil an unpleasant yet necessary duty

Towards eight o'clock that evening Nejdánof was sitting in his room writing to his friend Sílín :—

“Vladímir, my friend, I am writing to you at the moment of a complete change in my existence. I have been dismissed from this house and am leaving it. That would be nothing but I do not leave it alone. The girl of whom I wrote to you accompanies me. Everything unites us—the similarity of our lives, of our convictions and aspirations, the reciprocity of our feelings ; in a word, we love one another ; at least I am convinced that I cannot feel love in any form different from this. But I should not be telling you the truth if I said that I feel no inward fear, no sinking at heart. All is dark before us, and we twain are rushing into that darkness. I need not explain to you the end we have in view, nor the work which we have chosen. We are not in search of happiness ; we do not want to enjoy ourselves, but to struggle together, side by side, supporting one another. Our object is clear to us, but what paths may lead to it we know not. Shall we find, if not sympathy or help, at least the possibility of action ? Mariánna is an admirable, trustworthy girl. If it be our fate to perish, I shall not reproach myself for having led her astray, for no other life is now possible for her. Yet, Vladímir, my friend, my heart is heavy ! Doubt tortures me, not, of course, of my feelings for her, yet I know not ; only now it is too late to go back. Give us both your hand from afar, and wish us patience and strength for sacrifice and love—especially love. And thou, O Russian people, whom we know not, but whom we love with all our being ; for whom we will give our hearts' blood, receive us not too coldly, and teach us

what to await from thee. Good-bye, Vladímir, good-bye !”

After writing these few lines Nejdánof went off to the village. The next morning, at daybreak, he was already standing at the edge of the birch copse not far from Sipiágin's garden. A little further back, in the tangled foliage of a thick mass of hazel-bushes, stood a peasant's cart, almost hidden, with two unbridled horses. In the cart, under the seat of twisted ropes, slept a little old grey peasant, lying on a bundle of hay, with a ragged cloak pulled over his head. Nejdánof was looking steadfastly at the road and at the clumps of willows along the edge of the garden. The grey, silent night still lay around, and the stars twinkled feebly one after another, lost in the dreary depths of the heavens. A pale tint, arising from the east, was spreading along the lower edges of the clouds piled across the sky ; and from the east, too, came the sharp cold of dawn. Suddenly Nejdánof started, and listened eagerly ; a wicket-gate had creaked, then shut, somewhere not far off. A slight, girlish figure, wrapped in a kerchief, and holding a bundle in her gloveless hand, came slowly out of the shadow of the willows into the soft dust of the road and, crossing it on tiptoe, in a slanting direction, came towards the copse. Nejdánof rushed towards her.

“ Mariánna !” he whispered.

“ It is I,” came the low answer from under the muffling handkerchief.

“ This way, follow me,” answered Nejdánof, awkwardly seizing the bare hand which held the bundle.

She shivered as if from cold. He led her up to the cart and woke the peasant, who jumped up at once, clambered on to the box, put on his cloak and caught up the reins of rope. The horses made a start ; he restrained them in a low voice, hoarse from sleep. Nejdánof helped Mariánna on to the seat of

twisted ropes, after spreading out his shawl for her to sit on ; then, wrapping a rug round her feet, for the hay at the bottom was damp, took his seat by her side, and stooping towards the peasant said, "Go on, you know the way." The peasant shook the reins and the horses moved slowly out of the wood, shivering and coughing ; then the cart, springing and jolting on its narrow old wheels, rolled along the road. Nejdánof had one hand round Mariánna ; she raised the handkerchief with her cold fingers, and, turning her face towards him, smiled and said—

"How gloriously fresh, Aliósha !"

"Yes," answered the peasant, "there will be a heavy dew !"

The dew was so heavy already that the axles of the wheels, as they touched the tips of the taller plants by the roadside, sent whole showers of tiny drops flying, and the green of the grass looked a blueish grey.

Mariánna again shivered.

"It is fresh, fresh," she repeated, "and the freedom, Aliósha, the freedom !"

CHAPTER XXVII.

SOLÓMIN hurried to the gate of the factory the moment a workman ran to inform him that a gentleman and lady had arrived in a country cart and were asking for him. He did not wish them good-day, but only nodded to them several times, and ordering the peasant who was driving to go into the yard, made him draw up to the wing where he lived, then helped Mariánna to alight. Nejdánof sprang down after her. Solómin led them through a long and dark passage, then by a narrow spiral staircase to the first floor at the back of the wing. Here he opened a low door, and they all entered a small but fairly tidy room with two windows.

“Welcome!” said Solómin with his usual smile, which now, however, seemed broader and brighter than ever. This is your lodging—this room and another here next to it. It is not much to look at, but I dare say you can manage. And no one can stare at you here. Under the windows you have what my employer calls a flower-garden; I call it a kitchen-garden. It ends at the wall there, and there are palisades to the right and left. Quiet enough! Now,

welcome again, my dear young lady, and you, Nejdánof, welcome!"

He shook hands with them. They were standing motionless, without taking off their wraps, and were looking straight in front of them in silent astonishment, half excitement, half pleasure.

"Well, what is the matter with you?" said Solómin. "Come down from the clouds! What have you brought with you?"

Mariánna showed the parcel which she was still holding in her hand. "I have nothing but this."

"I have a carpet-bag and a hand-bag in the cart. I will get them"

"Stop, stop!" Solómin opened the door, "Pável!" he called down the dark staircase, "run and fetch the things which are in the cart, and bring them here."

"Directly," answered the voice of the "omnipresent."

Solómin turned to Mariánna, who had thrown off her handkerchief and begun to unfasten her cloak.

"So everything went off well?" he asked.

"Yes, no one saw us. I left a letter for Mr. Sipiágin. I have brought no clothes or linen with me, Vasíli Fedótitch, because as you are going to send us out" (for some reason she did not add "among the people") "it will be all the same. They would have been of no use. And I have some money with me to buy all I want."

"We will see about all that afterwards. Here," he added, pointing to Pável who was bringing in Nejdánof's luggage, "is the best friend I have in the place; I recommend him to you; you can trust him fully, as you would me. Have you told Tatiána about the tea-urn?" he asked Pavel, in a lower tone.

"It will be ready directly," answered Pavel, "cream and all."

"Tatiána is his wife," explained Solómin, "and as

faithful as he is. While you are . . . becoming used to matters a little, my dear young lady, she will be your servant."

Mariánna threw her cloak on to a leather sofa which stood in the corner. "Call me Mariánna, Vasíli Fedótitch, I do not want to be a young lady! And I need no servant. I did not leave . . . that place to have servants. Do not look at my clothes, I had nothing else there. That will all have to be changed."

Her dress of dark drap de dame was very simple, but it was made by a Petersburg dressmaker, and fitted her shoulders and figure neatly—in fact it was fashionable.

✓ "Well, if you will not have a servant, she shall be your help, after the American fashion. Now you had better have some tea. It is still early, but I expect you are both tired. I must be off to look after the factory; we shall meet again later. If you want anything, tell Pável or Tatiána."

Mariánna stretched out both hands eagerly. "How can we thank you, Vasíli Fedótitch?" she looked at him gratefully.

Solómin stroked one hand gently. "I would say, 'It is not worth thanking me for,' but that would not be true. I had better say that your thanks give me great pleasure. So now we are quits. Good-bye. Come along, Pável!"

Mariánna and Nejdánof remained alone. She sprang towards him, and looked at him with the same expression as at Solómin, only still more joyful, more grateful and brighter, then said, "Oh my friend! we are beginning a new life . . . at last, at last! You would not believe how sweet and pleasant this little room, in which we are to spend only a few days, seems in comparison with those hateful mansions! Tell me, are you happy?"

Nejdánof took her hands, and pressed them to his breast.

"I am happy, Mariánna, at beginning this new life with you. You will be my guiding star, my support, my strength . . ."

"Dear Aliósha! But wait a minute; I must make myself tidy, and freshen my dress a little. I will go into that room; you can stay here. I will be back in an instant."

Mariánna went into the next room and shut the door. The next moment she opened it again slightly, put out her head, and said, "How charming Solómin is!" then shut it, and Nejdánof heard the click of the lock.

He walked up to the window and looked into the garden . . . An old, a very old apple-tree for some inexplicable reason seemed to catch his eye. He stretched and shook himself, opened his bag, but took nothing out, and began to dream . . .

In a quarter of an hour Mariánna came back, with her face freshened and the dust washed off, gay and lively; and a few moments later appeared Pável's wife, Tatiána, with the urn and tea-tray, the bread and the cream.

The exact opposite to her gipsy-like husband, she was a pure Russian type, stout, with light hair twisted tightly in a long plait round a horn comb on her capless head, with large, pleasant features and honest grey eyes. She was dressed in a neat though faded calico, and her hands were well made and clean, though large. She bowed gravely, and saying in a firm, clear voice without any sing-song, "I wish you health," began to arrange the urn and cups.

Mariánna went up to her: "Let me help you, Tatiána. Give me a napkin . . ."

"Never mind, miss, we are used to that. Vasíli Fedótitch has given orders. If you want any-

thing be so good as tell us, and we will do it with pleasure."

"Tatiána, please do not call me 'miss.' I am dressed like a young lady, but I am quite"

The steady look of Tatiána's clear eyes confused Mariánna, who stopped.

"What might you be then?" asked Tatiána, in her even voice.

"Well, certainly, if you insist, I am a noble; but I want to give up all that, and become like all peasant women."

"Oh, that is it! Now I know. You are one of those who want to simplify themselves. There are not a few of them now."

"What did you say, Tatiána?—to simplify themselves?"

"Yes, that is the way we have of calling them. It means to be all one with the simple people—to be simplified. Well, it is a good thing to teach the people sense and wisdom. But difficult!—oh, difficult! God give you luck!"

"To simplify ourselves!" repeated Mariánna. "Do you hear, Aliósha? you and I are simplified!"

Nejdánof laughed, and also repeated "simplified."

"Will that be your husband or your brother?" asked Tatiána, as she carefully washed out the cups with her large nimble hands, and glanced with a good-natured smile from one to the other.

"No," answered Mariánna, "he is neither my husband nor my brother."

Tatiána raised her head. "Then you are living in free grace! Well, that too happens often now. Once it was only the dissenters—and now other people too. If only you have God's blessing, and live in peace, you want no priest; we have people like that in the factory. Not the worst, either."

"What nice words you have, Tatiána! 'In free

grace!' I like that very much. Now, I want to ask you something, Tatiána. I want to buy or make myself some clothes—like yours, now, or plainer still. Shoes and stockings and a jacket—everything like yours. I have money for it."

"Well, miss, that can be managed. Now, don't be angry, I won't do it again. I won't call you miss. Only what am I to call you?"

"Mariánna."

"And your father's name?"

"Why need you know it? Call me Mariánna simply. I call you Tatiána."

"It is the same thing, and yet it isn't. You had better tell me."

"Well, my father's name was Vikénti. And yours?"

"Mine? Osip."*

"Then I shall call you Tatiána Osípovna."

"And I shall call you Mariánna Vikéntievna. How nice that will be!"

"Will you have a glass of tea with us, Tatiána Osípovna?"

"As this is our first meeting, I think I may, Mariánna Vikéntievna. I'll treat myself to a cup. Iegóritch would scold me if I did it often."

"Who is Iegóritch?"

"Pável, my husband."

"Take a seat, Tatiána Osípovna."

"So I will, Mariánna Vikéntievna."

Tatiána sat down and began to drink her tea, turning a lump of sugar round and round in her fingers, and closing her eye on the side on which she nibbled bits off it. Mariánna began talking to her. Tatiána answered in a natural tone, and herself talked and asked questions. She almost worshipped Solómin, and ranked her husband directly after him. Still the factory life weighed upon her.

* Joseph.

“It is neither town nor village here. If it were not for Vasíli Fedótitch I should not stop an hour!”

Mariánna listened attentively to all she said. Nejdánof, who was sitting a little aside, watched his companion, and did not wonder at the attention she showed. To Mariánna it was all new; as for him he seemed to have seen and talked to hundreds of such Tatiánas.

“You think, Tatiána Osípovna,” said Mariánna, presently, “that we want to teach the people; no, we want to serve them.”

“How serve them? Teach them; there is your service for you. Why, look at me! When I married Iegóritch there, I could neither read nor write; and now I know, thanks to Vasíli Fedótitch. He did not teach me himself, but paid an old man, who taught me. For I am still young, big though I be.”

Mariánna made no answer.

“I should like, Tatiána Osípovna,” she said, after a pause, “to learn some trade . . . but we will talk again about that. I sew badly, but if I learnt I might turn cook.”

Tatiána looked thoughtful. “How cook? Rich people, merchants, have cooks; the poor cook for themselves. And as for cooking for an artel,* for working men, why, that is the very last trade to take to!”

“But I should not mind living with rich people, as long as I mixed with the poor. Otherwise how shall I get to know them? I shall not always have such chances as this.”

Tatiána turned her empty cup upside down, to show that she had had enough.

“It is a ticklish business,” she at last said with a sigh; “you cannot twist it round your finger like a

* Communistic associations of workmen.

ring. What I know I will tell you, but it is not much that I am learned in. You must talk to Iegóritch ; for he knows everything, reads all kinds of books, and can tell you all you want in a minute." Here she glanced at Mariánna, who was rolling a cigarette. "There is another thing, begging your pardon, Mariánna Vikéntievna, but if you really want to simplify yourself you must give that up." She pointed to the cigarette. "Because in such callings, take a cook's for instance, that is not allowed ; besides, every one will see at once that you are a lady. Yes."

Mariánna threw the cigarette out of window.

"I will not smoke ; I can easily give that up. Peasant women do not, so I ought not to."

"That is true, what you have just said, Mariánna Vikéntievna. The men spoil themselves with that smoking ; we women—no. Is it not so ? And here is Vasíli Fedótitch himself coming. I know his step. You ask him ; he will set everything straight for you, as best may be."

Solómin's voice was heard at the door.

"May I come in ?"

"Come in, come in !" cried Mariánna.

"That is an English habit I have caught," said Solómin, as he entered. "Well, how are you getting on ? Not dull yet ? I see you are chatting with Tatiána over your tea. You listen to her. She is a sensible woman. My employer is coming to-day, by bad luck ! And he will stop to dinner. It can't be helped ; he is the master."

"What sort of a man is he ?" asked Nejdánof, coming out of his corner.

"Not bad. He is not a baby. One of the new kind. Very polite, and wears linen. He peeps at everything, as if he were an old hand. Flays one a bit ; says 'Be so good as to turn over on to this side ; there is another tender patch here I must touch up a

little !' But with me he is as good as gold ; he can't do without me ! Only I came to tell you that to-day you probably would not see much of me. They will bring you your dinner. But do not show yourselves outside. What do you think, Mariánna, will the Sipiágins endeavour to find you—to follow you up ?”

“ I think not,” answered Mariánna.

“ And I am sure they will,” said Nejdánof.

“ Well, all the same,” said Solómin, “ we must be careful just at first. By-and-by it will be all right.”

“ Yes,” said Nejdánof, “ but Markélof must know where I am ; we must send to him.”

“ Why ?”

“ It is necessary for the cause. He must always know where I am. I have promised. Besides, he will not tell tales !”

“ All right. We will send Pável.”

“ And my clothes will be ready ?” asked Nejdánof.

“ Oh, the costume ? Yes, oh, yes ! Quite a masquerade ; not a dear one, luckily. Good bye ; rest yourselves. Come, Tatiána.”

Mariánna and Nejdánof again remained alone.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THEY began by shaking hands once more, then Mariánna exclaimed,—

“Wait! I will help you to set your room tidy,” and began to unpack his bags. Nejdánof wanted to help her, but she declared that she meant to do it all herself. “Because I must accustom myself to be useful.” So she hung his clothes on some nails which she had found in the table-drawer, and knocked into the wall with the back of a brush, as she had no hammer; then put his linen into an old chest of drawers which stood between the windows.

“What is this?” she asked, all at once. “A revolver! Is it loaded? What do you want it for?”

“It is not loaded; but give it me. You ask what it is for? Do you think we can do without a revolver in our calling?”

She laughed, and continued her work, shaking out each separate article and dusting it with the palm of her hand; she put two pairs of boots under the sofa, and solemnly arranged a few books, a bundle of papers, and the little manuscript book of poetry, on a three-legged table in the corner, which she named the writing and working table, as opposed to the other, which was round, and which she called the dinner and tea table. Then she took up the book of verses, and,

raising it to her face, looked over the edge at Nejdánof, and said with a smile,—

“We must read all this together at some leisure-moment, eh?”

“Give me that book—I will burn it,” exclaimed Nejdánof. “It is worth nothing else.”

“If so, why did you bring it with you? No, no, I will not let you burn it. Besides, they say poets always threaten, but never do burn their writings. Still I had better carry it off.”

Nejdánof tried to protest, but Mariánna ran into her room with the book and came back without it.

She sat down by his side, but rose again instantly.

“You have not been in my room yet: will you look at it? It is as good as yours. Come and see it?”

Nejdánof rose and followed Mariánna. Her room, as she called it, was a little smaller than his, but the furniture seemed somewhat cleaner and newer; on the window-sill stood a crystal vase with flowers, and in the corner an iron bedstead.

“Do you see how attentive Solómin is?” exclaimed Mariánna, “only we must not spoil ourselves too much; we shall not often have such rooms as these. I have thought of one thing which would be very pleasant; if we could manage to get some occupation together, so as not to separate. It will be difficult,” she added, after a pause; “we must think about it. But in any case you will not go back to Petersburg, will you?”

“What should I do in Petersburg? Attend the University and give lessons? That will not do now.”

“We will see what Solómin thinks,” said Mariánna. “He will be better able to decide what we are to do and how to do it.”

They returned into the other room, and again sat down side by side. They praised Solómin, Tatiána, Pável; they spoke of Sipiágin, and of how their

former life had suddenly receded so far from them, as if a mist had hidden it. Then they shook hands once more, and looked at each other joyfully; then they discussed into what classes they should endeavour to penetrate, and how they should behave so as not to be suspected.

Nejdánof maintained that the less they thought about it, the simpler they behaved, the better they would succeed.

"Of course!" she exclaimed, "we want to simplify ourselves, as Tatiána put it."

"I hardly meant that," began Nejdánof. "I meant to say that we must not be unnatural . . ."

Mariánna suddenly burst out laughing. "I was remembering, Aliósha, how I called us 'simplified!'"

Nejdánof also laughed and repeated "simplified," then fell into a reverie.

Mariánna too was silent.

"Aliósha!" she at length said.

"What is it?"

"I think we neither of us feel quite at our ease. Newly married people the first day of their wedding trip must feel as we do. They are happy—very happy, but a little awkward."

Nejdánof's smile was rather constrained.

"You know quite well, Mariánna, that we are not a newly married couple in your sense of the word."

Mariánna rose and stood in front of him.

"That depends on you."

"What do you mean?"

"Aliósha, when you tell me as an honest man—and I trust you because I know you are an honest man—when you tell me that you love me with that love—well, that love which gives one a right over the life of another person; when you tell me that, I will be yours."

Nejdánof grew red and turned away his head.

"When I tell you . . ." he began.

"Yes! But you yourself see you cannot tell me that now. . . . Yes, Aliósha, you are indeed an honest man. Now let us talk about more serious things."

"But I love you, Mariánna!"

"I do not doubt it. . . . and can wait. Stop a moment; I have not put your writing-table in good order yet. Here is something wrapped up as if it belonged to a woman. . . ."

Nejdánof sprang from his chair. "Leave that alone, Mariánna; please leave it alone."

Mariánna looked at him over her shoulder, and raised her eyebrows in astonishment.

"Why, is it a secret? Have you a secret?"

"Yes, yes," said Nejdánof; and in his confusion added as an explanation, "It is a portrait."

The word had passed his lips involuntarily. In the paper which Mariánna held was wrapped her own portrait, the one that Markélof had given him.

"A portrait!" she said, slowly. "A woman's portrait?"

She gave it him, but he took it so clumsily that it almost slipped out of his hand, and the paper came off.

"Why, it is my own," said Mariánna quickly. "Well, my own portrait I have a right to see."

She took it from Nejdánof.

"Did you draw this?"

"No, I did not."

"Who did?—Markélof?"

"You have guessed. It was."

"How did you obtain it?"

"He gave it me."

"When?"

Nejdánof told her how and when. While he was speaking Mariánna looked alternately at him and at the portrait, and both of them, both Nejdánof and

she herself, felt the same thought flash across their minds.

“If he had been in this room he would have had the right. . . .”

But neither of them expressed this aloud, possibly because each guessed the other's thoughts.

Mariánna folded the paper round the portrait, and laid it gently on the table.

“A good man!” she said, in a low voice. “Where is he now?”

“Where? Why at home in his own house. I shall go to him to-morrow, or the day after, for books and pamphlets. He meant to have given me some, but I suppose forgot as I was leaving him.”

“Do you think, Aliósha, that when he gave you this portrait he meant to give up everything—everything?”

“I think so.”

“And you expect to find him at home?”

“Of course.”

“Ah!” Mariánna dropped her eyes and let her hands fall. “And here is Tatiána bringing our dinner,” she suddenly exclaimed. “What an admirable woman!”

Tatiána entered with the plates, napkins, and dishes. As she spread the cloth she told them what had been going on in the factory.

“The master came from Moscow by rail, and began running all over the building like a madman; but you see, he understands nothing at all, and only does it for the look of the thing, for the example. And Vasíli Fedótitch treats him like a little child. The master wanted to have his own way in something, and Vasíli Fedótitch stopped him in a minute. ‘I will throw it all over,’ he said. And the other one put his tail between his legs directly. They are dining together now, and the master has brought a friend with him. This one only wonders at everything he sees. A rich

man, I should guess, this friend, for he doesn't talk, and only shakes his head. And fat—so fat! A Moscow ace of trumps! It is a true proverb which says, 'Moscow is downhill to all Russia; everything rolls towards her!'"

"How observant you are!" exclaimed Mariánna.

"I keep my eyes open," answered Tatiána. "There, your dinner is ready. May you enjoy it! I will sit here a little and watch you."

They sat down. Tatiána leaned against the window-sill and propped her head on her hand.

"When I come to look at you," she said, "what poor little tender lambs you both are! It is so pleasant to look at you, I feel quite sad! Oh, my little doves, you are taking on yourselves trouble greater than you can bear! Such people as you the Tsar's folk are fond of putting into prison."

"Never mind, my good woman," remarked Nejdánof, "do not you try and frighten us. You know the proverb, 'If you call yourself a mushroom, you must go into the basket!'"

"I know it, I know it; but baskets nowadays are narrower, and harder to get out of!"

"Have you any children?" asked Mariánna, to change the conversation.

"One; a boy. He has begun to go to school. I had a daughter, but she died, poor heart! She had an accident, was caught in a wheel. And even if it had killed her outright! But she dragged on a long time. From that day I have become tender-hearted; before then I was as hard as wood!"

"And how about your Pável Iegóritch, did you not love him?"

"Oh, that is another thing. That is all very well for a girl. Now you—do you love yours, or not?"

"Yes."

"Love him very much?"

“Very much.”

“What . . . ?”

Tatiána looked at Mariánna, then at Nejdánof, and did not finish her sentence.

Mariánna again changed the subject. She told Tatiána that she had given up smoking ; whereon the latter praised her. Then Mariánna again asked about the clothes, and reminded her that she had promised to show her how to cook.

“And another thing,” she said, “cannot I get some coarse yarn ? I want to knit some plain stockings.”

Tatiána answered that everything should be done in proper style, and, having cleared the table, left the room with her firm, quiet step.

“Now, what shall we do ?” said Mariánna turning to Nejdánof ; and without waiting for an answer : “If you like, as our real work only begins to-morrow, let us devote this evening to literature. We will read your verses. I will be a stern critic !”

Nejdánof would not consent for some time. However, he ended by yielding, and began to read out of his book. Mariánna sat near him and looked in his face as he read. She was right in saying that she would be a stern critic. Very few pieces pleased her ; she preferred those which were short, purely lyric, and without a moral, as she said. Nejdánof did not read over well. He could not bring himself to declaim, and did not like falling into mere flatness ; so the result was neither fish nor flesh.

Mariánna all at once interrupted him by asking whether he knew a beautiful piece of verse by Dobroliúbof, beginning, “Let me die, I care but little,”* and at once repeated it, but not well either ; in rather a childish manner.

* “Let me die, I care but little : but one thing grieves my melancholy soul ; I fear lest death may play some heartless game over me. I fear lest o'er my cold body hot tears should

Nejdánof remarked that it was too sad and bitter, and then added that he, Nejdánof, could not have written that poem because he had no reason to fear tears being shed over his grave, as there would not be any.

"There will be, if I survive you," said Mariánna, slowly ; then, raising her eyes to the ceiling, she asked after a pause, in a low voice, as if speaking to herself, "How could he have drawn that portrait of me ? From memory ?"

Nejdánof turned quickly round to her—

"Yes, from memory."

Mariánna was astonished at being answered. She imagined that she had only thought the question.

"It is extraordinary," she continued, in the same tone, "he has no talent whatever for drawing. What was I about to say ?" she added, aloud. "Oh, yes ; about those verses of Dobroliúbof. One ought to write verses like Pushkin, or like those of Dobroliúbof ; it is not poetry, but at least as good."

"And verses like mine," asked Nejdánof, "ought not to be written at all ? Is that not so ?"

"Verses like yours please friends, not because they are very good, but because you are good and they are like you."

Nejdánof smiled. "That is their epitaph ; and mine too, by the way."

Mariánna tapped his arm and called him naughty. Soon after she said she felt tired and was going to bed.

"By-the-by," she added, shaking her short, thick curls, "you know, I have a hundred and thirty-seven roubles ; and you ?"

be shed ; lest some one in clumsy sympathy should bring flowers to my bier ; lest any friends should follow it with no selfish motive ; lest words of love should be spoken over the earth of my grave ; lest all that I have craved so longingly and so vainly here on earth, should smile at me joyously from over the planks of my bier."

“Ninety-eight.”

“Oh, we are rich. For simplified people! Well, till to-morrow.”

She went into her room. A few moments later the door again opened a little, and through the narrow opening he heard, “Good-bye!” and again in a softer voice, “Good-bye!” and the key snapped in the lock.

Nejdánof threw himself on the sofa and covered his face with his hands. Then he rose quickly, went up to the door and knocked.

“What is it?” asked Mariánna.

“Not ‘till to-morrow,’ Mariánna, but ‘to-morrow.’”

“To-morrow!” echoed the quiet voice.

CHAPTER XXIX.

EARLY next morning Nejdánof again knocked at Mariánna's door.

"It is I," he said, in answer to her question who was there. "Can you come out to me?"

"Directly. Wait a moment."

She came out, and started back. For a moment she had not known him. He had on an old yellow caftan of nankin, with a high waist and little buttons. He had parted his hair in the middle, in the Russian fashion, and had tied a blue handkerchief round his neck. In his hand he held a cap with a broken peak; and he had on dirty boots of coarse hide.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Mariánna, "how ugly you are!" and she threw her arms quickly round him and gave him a kiss. "But why have you dressed like that? You look like a second-rate shopkeeper, or a pedlar, or a servant out of place. Why this caftan, and not a blouse or a long peasant's coat?"

"That is just it," began Nejdánof, who in his new costume was really like some petty shopkeeper. He felt this, and was inwardly vexed and confused—so confused that he kept on touching his clothes with the fingers of both hands, as if to get rid of them. "That is just it. Pável assures me that in a blouse or a

peasant's dress I should be found out at once, whereas this, according to him, suits me as if I had never worn anything else in my life! which, I may remark parenthetically, is not very flattering to my vanity."

"Are you going to begin at once, then?" asked Mariánna, excitedly.

"Yes, I shall try, though, . . . to tell the truth . . ."

"Happy man!" interrupted Mariánna.

"What a wonderful man that Pável is!" continued Nejdánof. "He knows everything, and his eyes look you through and through; then he all at once screws up his face as if he were quite uninterested and knew nothing at all about it! Helps us, and yet does nothing but laugh at us. He has brought me some pamphlets from Markélof. He knows him, too, and calls him by his name, Sergéi Mikháilovitch; and he would follow Solómin through fire and water."

"So would Tatiána," said Mariánna. "How is it that people are so attached to him?"

Nejdánof made no answer.

"What pamphlets has Pável brought you?" asked Mariánna.

"The usual ones: 'The Tale of the Four Brothers,' and others—the usual well-known ones; and they are the best."

Mariánna looked round impatiently.

"Where is Tatiána, I wonder? She promised to come early."

"Here she is," said Tatiána, coming into the room with a parcel in her hand. She had heard Mariánna's exclamation at the door. "You will have plenty of time. . . . You need not fret!"

Mariánna rushed to meet her.

"Have you brought it?"

Tatiána touched the parcel.

"It is all here . . . from top to toe. We will try it

on ; and then you will only have to show it off, and astonish the people !”

“Oh, come, come along, Tatiána Osípovna. . . .” And Mariánna dragged her into her room.

Nejdánof, who remained alone, walked once or twice across the room with a shuffling step, which for some reason he imagined to be like that of a shopkeeper ; then he cautiously sniffed his sleeve and the inside of his cap, and made a wry face ; then looked at himself in a little mirror by the window, and shook his head. He was so ugly !

“All the better,” he thought.

Then he got out a few pamphlets and put them in his tail-pocket, and said in a low tone,—

“Well, . . . my lads, . . . nohow . . . this, you see . . . so to say . . . I think it will pass muster,” he again thought. “But what is the use of acting this farce ? My dress answers for me.”

And he remembered the story of a certain exile—a German—who had to escape right through Russia, and who spoke Russian very badly ; but, thanks to a catskin cap, such as merchants wear, which he bought in a district town, he was taken for a merchant everywhere, and crossed the frontier in safety.

At this moment Solómin came in.

“Aha !” he exclaimed ; “fitted out ? But it is too early yet. Or do you want to get used to it ? In that case, all right. But anyhow you must wait a little. My employer has not gone yet. He is still asleep.”

“I will go out later,” answered Nejdánof, “and take a walk round the neighbourhood, till we see whether we do not receive any orders from the chief.”

“Right ! Only one thing, brother Alexéi. May I call you Alexéi ?”

“Do. Likséi,* if you like,” added Nejdánof, with a laugh.

* Popular corruption of Alexéi.

"No, no. Why overdo it? Listen. A good understanding, it is said, is better than money. I see you have some pamphlets. Give them away where you will, but not in the factory!"

"Why not?"

"Why, firstly, because it would be dangerous for you. In the second place, I have promised my employer that there should be nothing of the kind here; for the factory, after all, belongs to him. Thirdly, we have made a little start—schools and other things; and you might spoil all. Do what you please elsewhere, I do not hinder you, but let my workmen alone."

"Prudence never does any harm, eh?" said Nejdánof, with a slight sneer.

Solómin smiled broadly, as usual.

"Exactly so, brother Alexéi. It never does any harm. But what vision do I see? Where are we?"

These exclamations referred to Mariánna, who had appeared on the threshold of her room, dressed in a many-coloured, washed-out cotton gown, with a yellow handkerchief over her shoulders and a red one on her head. Tatiána was looking over her shoulder, and was admiring her good-naturedly. Mariánna looked younger and fresher in her simple dress, which suited her far better than the long caftan did Nejdánof.

"Please do not laugh, Vasli Fedótitch," entreated Mariánna, blushing like a poppy.

"What a couple!" exclaimed Tatiána meanwhile, and clapped her hands. "Only don't be angry, my young gentleman. You are well enough; but beside my beauty you don't cut much of a figure."

"She is charming indeed," thought Nejdánof. "Oh, how I love her!"

"And look!" continued Tatiána; "we have changed rings. She has taken my silver one, and given me hers, which is gold."

"Peasant-girls do not wear gold rings," said Mariánna.

Tatiána sighed. "I will keep it for you, my pigeon ; never fear."

"Now, sit down—sit down, both of you," began Solómin, who had been looking at Mariánna all the time with his head slightly on one side. "In olden days, you remember, people always sat down before setting forth on a journey. And before you lies a long and difficult journey."

Mariánna, still blushing, sat down ; so did Nejdánof, then Solómin ; even Tatiána sat down on a large log of wood standing on end. Solómin looked at first one then another, and said with a half-smile,—

"Now let us step aside and look
How nicely we are sitting,"

then suddenly burst out laughing, but so pleasantly that no one was offended ; on the contrary, they all felt gayer.

Nejdánof suddenly rose.

"I shall go at once," he said ; "this is all very charming, but it is rather like a vaudeville in masquerading dress. Don't alarm yourself," he turned to Solómin, "I will not meddle with your workmen. I will take a stroll in the neighbourhood, and when I come back will tell you my adventures, Mariánna, if I have any to tell. Give me your hand, for luck !"

"Won't you have some tea first?" remarked Tatiána.

"No ; it is no time for tea-drinking. If I want anything I will go into an inn, or a tavern will do."

Tatiána shook her head. "The way those taverns have grown up along the high road ! Like fleas in a sheepskin. There are plenty of big villages Balmasóvo, for instance. . . ."

"Good-bye" said Nejdánof, but corrected himself, "wish you good-day," he said, trying to enter into

his part. But before he reached the door, Pável appeared from the passage under his very nose, and giving him a long, thin staff, with the bark peeled spirally all down it, said,—

“Take this, Alexéi Dmítritch, lean on it as you walk, and the further you place it from yourself, the better it will be.”

Nejdánof took the staff in silence and went out, with Pável after him. Tatiána was also going out, but Mariánna rose and stopped her; “Wait a minute, Tatiána Osípovna, I want you.”

“I will come back directly, and bring the tea-urn. Your companion has gone out without tea; I suppose he was in a great hurry. But why should you punish yourself? If you wait a bit, things will be clearer.”

Tatiána left the room, and Solómin also rose. Mariánna was standing with her back to him, and when she turned round, surprised at his long silence, she saw in his face, and in his eyes, which were fixed intently upon her, an expression such as she never noticed in them before; an inquiring, uneasy, almost inquisitive expression. She felt confused, and blushed again. Solómin seemed almost ashamed that she should have seen the expression on his face, and said, louder than usual,—

“So, Mariánna, you have begun at last.”

“Begun, Vasíli Fedótitch? Do you call this a beginning? I feel very ill at ease just now. Alexéi was right; we seem to be playing a sort of comedy.”

Solómin sat down again.

“But, Mariánna, how did you imagine you were going to begin? By building barricades with a flag on the top, and hurrah for the republic? That is not a woman’s business. No, to-day you may teach some Lukéria or other something useful, and it will be no easy task, for Lukéria has a slow comprehension,

and is afraid of you ; besides which, she imagines that she has absolutely no use for what you want to teach her ; and after a few weeks you will torment yourself over another Lukéria ; and meanwhile you will wash a child, or teach him his alphabet, or give a sick man medicine . . . there is your beginning for you."

"But Sisters of Mercy do that, Vasíli Fedótitch ! If that is all, what is the good of all this ? . . ." Mariánna pointed to herself and all round her with a vague movement of her hand. "I dreamt of something more."

"You wanted to sacrifice yourself ?"

Mariánna's eyes sparkled. "Yes . . . yes !"

"And Nejdánof ?"

Mariánna shrugged her shoulders. "What of Nejdánof ? We will go together, or I will go alone."

Solómin looked steadily at Mariánna.

"Do you know," he said, "excuse the coarseness of my expression, but according to me, to comb the hair of a filthy child is a sacrifice—a great sacrifice, of which not many are capable."

"But I do not shrink from that, Vasíli Fedótitch."

"I know you do not. Yes, *you* are capable of it. And, meantime, you can do that ; later on you may have something else to do."

"But for that I must learn from Tatiána !"

"Certainly . . . learn. You can wash the pots, pluck the fowls . . . And perhaps some day,—who knows ?—you will save the country !"

"You are laughing at me, Vasíli Fedótitch !"

"My dear Mariánna, believe me, I am not laughing at you ; my words are the plain truth. You Russian women are already greater and nobler than we men."

Mariánna raised her eyes.

"I could wish to fulfil your expectations, Solómin, and then—to die !"

Solómin again rose.

"No! Live, live! That is the great thing. By the way, would you care to know what is thought of your flight at the Sipiágin's? Whether they are taking any steps to find you? You have only to whisper a word to Pável; he will know everything in a moment."

Mariánna expressed her astonishment. "What a wonderful man you have there!"

"Yes; remarkable enough. For instance, when you and Alexéi wish to be married, it is he who will arrange everything with Zósima. . . . You remember, I told you of the priest of that name. . . . But at present it is not necessary. . . . Eh?"

"No."

"No? Very well, it shall be no." Solómin sauntered towards the door between the two rooms and glanced at the lock.

"What are you looking at?" asked Mariánna.

"Does the lock fasten?"

"Yes," she whispered.

Solómin turned towards her, but she did not raise her eyes.

"So you do not care to know what Sipiágin's plans are. . . . Eh?" he said, gaily, and turned to go out. . . .

"Vasíli Fedótitch. . . ."

"At your service."

"Please tell me why it is that you, who are generally so silent, talk so much to me? You do not know how it pleases me."

"Why?" (Solómin took both her soft little hands between his large horny palms), "why? Well, I suppose because I am very fond of you. Good-bye."

He went out; Mariánna stood looking thoughtfully after him, then went to find Tatiána, who had not yet brought the tea-urn. With her she drank tea,

certainly ; but she also washed some pots, and plucked some fowls, and even combed out the tangled hair of a boy.

About dinner-time she returned to her room. She did not have to wait long for Nejdánof. He came in tired and dusty, and dropped down on to the sofa. She at once sat down by his side.

“Well ! what has happened ? Tell me !”

“You remember the two lines,” he answered, in a feeble voice,—

“‘All this would be laughable
If it were not so sad’

Do you remember them ?”

“Of course I remember them.”

“Well, those same lines are admirably applicable to my first attempt. No ; after all I think the laughable decidedly predominates. In the first place, I am sure that nothing is easier than to play a part ; no one dreamt of suspecting me, only I had not thought of one thing ; one ought to invent some story beforehand, or they ask, ‘Where are you from ? what are you doing ?’ and one has nothing ready. However, even that is hardly necessary. You have only to offer a glass of whiskey in the first tavern and tell what lies you like.”

“Did you tell lies ?” asked Mariánna.

“Yes, as best I could. Secondly, all the people to whom I talked are, without exception, dissatisfied, and yet not one wishes to know the remedy. But as for the propaganda, I am decidedly of the feeblest : I left two pamphlets secretly in rooms, and put one into a cart ; whether anything will come of them God only knows. Then I offered pamphlets to four people ; one asked whether it was a religious book, and would not take it ; the second said he could not read, and took it for the children because there was a picture on

the binding ; a third kept on saying, " Yes, yes," then suddenly abused me most unexpectedly, and also refused to take it ; and the last man took his, and thanked me profusely for it, but I fancy did not understand a word of what I said to him. Besides all this, a dog bit my leg ; a woman, standing on the threshold of her cottage, threatened me with a poker, ' Ugh, you good-for-nothing Moscow ne'er-do-weels! will nothing drown you ? ' And a soldier on unlimited furlough called after me, ' Wait a bit, we will put a cartridge through you, comrade ! ' and that after he had got drunk at my expense ! "

" Anything more ? "

" Anything more ? I have given myself a corn : one of my boots is much too big. And I am very hungry, and I have a headache from the whiskey ? "

" Why, did you drink much ? "

" No, not much, just for the look of the thing ; but I have been in five taverns, and I cannot endure that filthy whiskey ! How the peasants can drink it I cannot understand. If, to simplify myself, I must drink whiskey, I had rather be excused. "

" So no one suspected you ? "

" Not a soul. One tavern-keeper, a fat, pale man, with light eyes, was the only person who even looked suspiciously at me. I heard him say to his wife, ' Keep your eye on that red-haired fellow who squints ' (I didn't know before that I squinted) ; ' he is a bad lot. See how queerly he drinks ! ' What he meant, I don't know ; something like the ' moveton '* in Gógol's ' Revisór ' ; do you remember ? Perhaps it was because I tried to throw the whiskey under the table on the sly. Oh, it is difficult, very difficult, to combine æsthetics and actual life ! "

" Another time you will be more successful," said

* Some officials reading a letter are much puzzled by this phonetic rendering of " mauvais ton. "

Mariánna, soothingly ; “but I am glad you have looked at your first attempt from a humorous point of view. You were not dull, were you ?”

“Oh, no, I was rather amused ; but I know exactly what I shall think about all this presently, and I shall be miserable and disgusted with it all.”

“No, I will not let you think. I will tell you what I have been doing. We shall have dinner directly ; and I may tell you that I have washed the pot in which Tatiána made our soup most admirably. I will tell you everything as we eat.”

And so she did ; and Nejdánof listened, and looked and looked at her, so that she once or twice stopped to allow him to say why he was looking at her so intently, but he remained silent.

After dinner she proposed to read Spielhagen aloud ; but she had not finished the first page when he rose impetuously, and, going up to her, threw himself at her feet. She rose ; he caught her knees in his arms, and began to utter confused, passionate, desperate words. “He wanted to die ; he knew he should die soon . . .” She made no movement, no resistance, calmly allowed him to embrace her knees, and calmly, nay, even gently, looked down upon him from above. She laid both hands on his head, which was buried in the folds of her dress. But her very calmness had a stronger effect on him than if she had repelled him.

He rose and said, “Forgive me, Mariánna, both for to-day and for yesterday. Tell me once more that you are ready to wait till I am worthy of your love, and forgive me.”

“I have given my word, and cannot change.”

“Thanks. Good-bye.”

He went out and Mariánna shut herself into her room.

CHAPTER XXX.

A FORTNIGHT later, in the same lodging, Nejdánof was writing to his friend Sílin, bent over his three-legged table, on which stood a tallow dip, giving a dim and grudging light. It was long past midnight; some mud-stained clothing lay scattered over the floor, just as it had been hurriedly thrown off; the rain drizzled without intermission against the window, and the warm wind swept with great sighs over the roof.

“DEAR VLADIMIR,—I write to you without putting any address on my letter, and even the letter itself will be sent by messenger to a distant post-office because my presence here is a secret, and to disclose it would be to ruin others besides myself. It will be enough for you to know that I have been living in a large factory, together with Mariánna, for the last fortnight. We fled from the Sipiágins’ house the same day as I wrote to you; and a friend, whom I will call Vasíli, has given us shelter here. He is the manager of this factory, and an excellent fellow. We shall only remain here for a time, till the moment for action has arrived; although, if one may judge from what has passed since our coming, that moment will not be yet, if ever! Vladímir, I am very, very un-

happy I must tell you before going any further that, though Mariánna and I fled together, yet, up to this time, we are living as brother and sister. She loves me, and has told me that she will be mine whenever I feel that I have the right to ask her.

“It is that right which I feel I have not. She trusts me and my honour and I will not deceive her. I know that I have never loved and never shall love any one (that is quite certain) more than I do her. But all the same, how can I join her fate to mine for ever? Bind a living being to a corpse? Well, if not to a corpse, at any rate to a man who is half dead! How could I conscientiously do it? You may say that if my passion were really strong my conscience would be silent. But though I may be a corpse, yet the corpse is still honourable and has good impulses. Please do not exclaim that I always exaggerate. All that I am telling you is the plain truth. As for Mariánna, she is by nature very reserved, and is now entirely engrossed in her work, in which she believes . . . while I?”

“Well, let us put aside love and personal happiness and such things. For the last fortnight I have been ‘among the people,’ and, honestly, it is difficult to imagine anything more stupid. Of course, the fault lies with me, and not with the cause. I grant that I am not a Slavophil; I am not one of those who *cure themselves* by contact with the people; I do not wear it on my chest when I am ill, like a hot flannel . . . I want to act on it myself, but in what way? How can I accomplish this? When I am among the people, I only look about me and listen, and if I am called upon to say anything myself I am lost! I myself feel that I am worth nothing. I am like a bad actor in a part he does not know. First I have a fit of conscientiousness, then comes scepticism and a wretched sense of humour directed at myself. All

this is not worth a farthing! It is even disgusting to think about it; disgusting to look at the old rags which I drag about—the masquerade, as Vasili calls it! People say that one must begin by learning the language of the people, knowing its ways and customs . . . nonsense, nonsense, nonsense! One must believe what one says, and then one can say what one will! I once happened to hear the preaching of a dissenting prophet: deuce knows what the fellow was saying; it was a compound of phrases taken from the Bible, from books, from the peasant dialect; it was not even Russian, but a kind of White Russian,* barely intelligible, while in the midst of it all he went on 'the spirit has come, the spirit has come,' like an old black cock calling. But his eyes were burning, his voice was firm and deep, his fists clenched, and he seemed made of iron! His listeners did not understand him, but they worshipped, and they followed him. Now when I begin to talk I do it as if I were begging their pardon for some fault. I feel inclined to turn dissenter; their wisdom is not great, true, but where is one to find the faith, the faith! Now Mariánna has faith, begins in the early morning, and works with Tatiána; there is a woman here of that name, a worthy soul, and no fool; she, by the way, says we want to 'simplify' ourselves, and calls us 'simplified'; well, Mariánna begins work with this woman, and never rests a moment, just like an ant. She is delighted that her hands are becoming red and hard, and is only waiting for the moment when she may go to the scaffold. As if the scaffold were not bad enough, she has even tried to do without shoes; she went somewhere and came back barefoot. After that I heard her washing her feet a long time, and I noticed she was walking carefully, because it hurt

* White Russia borders on Poland, and the dialect spoken there contains a good deal of Polish.

her, as she was not used to it ; but her face was all bright and joyous, as if she had found a treasure, or as if the sun were shining on it. Yes, Mariánna is a brave soul ! And whenever I talk to her about my feelings, to begin with, I am as ashamed as if I were laying hands on something which did not belong to me, and then that look, that terrible, loving, unresisting look . . . ‘take me if you will, but remember ! And why think of it at all ? Is there nothing better or nobler upon earth ?’ which in other words means ‘Put on a filthy caftan and go among the people’ . . . So I go among the people.

“Oh, and how I curse all the nervousness, the sensibility, the fastidiousness, which I have inherited from my aristocratic father ! What right had he to call me into existence and furnish me with organs which are totally unfit for the sphere in which I am destined to move ?—to make a bird, and then throw it into the water ?—to make a man of taste, and land him in the mud ?—to make a democrat, a lover of the people, in whom the mere smell of that accursed whiskey causes disgust—almost sickness ?”

“See what I have come to—begun to abuse my father ! But I made myself a democrat ; he had nothing to do with it.”

“Yes, Vladímir, I am doing badly. Grey and dismal thoughts have begun to attack me. You may ask me, Have I not, during this fortnight, come across some one consoling point—some good and vigorous, though ignorant, man ? What shall I say ? I have met something of the sort. I even found an admirable one, an energetic, fine fellow ; but, do what I would, he would have nothing to do with me or my pamphlets, and there was an end of it. He is a friend of Pável (a workman here, Vasíli’s right hand, a very clever, nay cunning man—a fellow with brains ; I mentioned him already, I think), a peasant, by name

Ielisár, also a clear-headed man, and with a mind free from all prejudices. Yet when I am with him there seems to be a wall between us. He looks the incarnation of a negative. Then I ran against another one, who belonged to the men of action. 'Now you, master,' he said, 'don't give me any of your talk; tell me straight away, will you give us all your land or not?' 'What do you mean?' I said. 'What sort of a master am I?' (I remember I added 'God be with you!') 'Why, if you are one of us,' he repeated, 'what is the use of you? Get away from me, will you!'

"Another thing I have noticed. If a man listens to you very willingly, and takes pamphlets directly, he is useless—'blown out with wind.' Or you may come across a peasant orator, one of the 'educated,' who only knows one pet word, which he repeats at every opportunity. I was simply tortured by such a one; everything with him was 'prodoocion.' Whatever you said, 'Ah,' he would repeat, 'that's the "prodoocion" of it!'—deuce take the fellow! One more remark. You may remember a discussion, a long time back, about 'unnecessary' people—Hamlets. Fancy, such 'unnecessary' people are found even among the peasants!—Of course they have their peculiarities; they are, indeed, mostly consumptive. They are interesting in their way, and come to us willingly enough, but are of no real use for the cause—as Hamlets have ever been.

"Well, what are you to do? Start a secret printing-press? But there are pamphlets enough without it—pamphlets which say, 'Cross yourself, and take up your axe,' and pamphlets which say simply 'Take up your axe.' Write stories of peasant life with a moral? You will probably not get them printed. Or take up the axe yourself?—against whom, with whom, and for what? For a soldier of the Crown to pot you with a gun belonging to the Crown? That is simply a

rather complicated form of suicide. One had better shoot oneself—at any rate, one can choose time and place, and be sure of the shot!

“I really believe that, if a patriotic war were to commence anywhere just now, I should start off and go there, not to free any one (free other nations while one’s own is enslaved!), but merely to put an end to myself.

“Our friend Vasíli, who has sheltered us here, is a happy man. He belongs to our camp, yet he is tranquil. He is not in a hurry. Another I might blame, but not him. Thence I conclude that the whole gist of the matter is not in one’s opinion, but in one’s character. Vasíli’s is such that you would not find a crack in it: and he is right. He spends a good deal of time with us, especially with Mariáanna. And here is a curious fact: I love her, and she loves me (I see you smiling at this, but it is really true), and yet we have no subjects of conversation. Now with him she talks, discusses, and listens to what he says. I have no cause for jealousy, for he is going to find her a place somewhere—at least, she is asking him to do so; only I feel bitter when I look at them. And yet, if I were to say a word about marriage, she would consent at once, and Zósima the priest would appear on the scene with ‘Rejoice, Isaiah!’* and all the rest of it. Only that would not make my heart lighter, and nothing would be changed by it. Life has snipped me off, as our friend the drunken tailor (you remember, Vladímir?) used to say when he complained of his wife.

“However, I feel that this will not go on long. I feel that something is impending.

“Have I not myself been insisting on, and proving the necessity of, ‘action’? Well, here we are at work!

“I do not remember whether I have written to you

* A canticle in the marriage ceremony.

about another acquaintance, a dark fellow, a relation of the Sipiágin's? He may yet make such a porridge of things that no one will eat it!

"I wanted to finish my letter, but no, I keep on concocting verses. I do not read them to Mariánná—she does not care for them much, while you sometimes praise them, and, better still, will never tell tales. I was struck by one characteristic common to all Russia. . . . But here they are:—

“A DREAM.

“’Twas long since I had been in my native land, but I found in it no great change. Always the same stagnation, bereft of life and thought, homes without roofs, ruined walls, the same filth and mud, poverty and apathy; the same slavish look, now abject, now over bold. Our people now is free, but the free arm hangs as before like a useless thong. All is as before. . . . In one thing only have we surpassed Europe, Asia, the whole world. Never, never yet have my dear countrymen slept so sound a sleep! All sleeps around, in village, in town, in cart or sledge, by day, by night, standing, sitting. . . . The merchant, the official, sleeps, the sentinel on his watch, in the depths of cold, or in the burning heat! The prisoner sleeps, and the judge snores. The peasants sleep like the dead; they reap and plough asleep; they thresh, and yet they sleep. Father, mother, all the family, all sleep. He who strikes sleeps, and he who receives the blow! Only the tavern is wakeful, and never closes an eye; and, clasping a whiskey-pot with a firm grip, her forehead at the Pole and her feet in the Caucasus, sleeps a never-ending sleep our country, our holy Russia!

“There, forgive me, but I did not wish to send you such a melancholy letter without something to amuse you at the end. You may laugh at my rhymes, and will find plenty of weak ones. When shall I write

you my next letter? and shall I ever write it? Whatever may happen to me I am sure you will not forget your true friend,

“A. N.”

“P.S.—Yes, our people sleep, but I think if an awakening were to come it would be very different from what we fancy.”

Having written the last line, Nejdánof dropped his pen, and lay down on his bed, saying to himself, “Now, you poetaster, try and go to sleep, and forget all this stuff!” But it was long before sleep obeyed his call.

The next morning he was awoke by Mariánna crossing the room on her way to Tatiána; but he had hardly dressed before she came back with an expression of joyous emotion on her face; she seemed excited.

“Do you know, Aliósha, they say that in the district of T., not far from here, it has already begun?”

“What? What has begun? Who says so?”

“Pável. They say that the peasants are rising, refusing to pay taxes, and collecting in troops.”

“Did you hear that yourself?”

“Tatiána told me. And here is Pável. Ask him.”

Pável came in and confirmed what Mariánna had said.

“There are troubles in the district of T., that is certain!” he said, shaking his beard and blinking his sharp black eyes. “Sergéi Mikháilovitch at work, I suppose. He has not been at home now for five days.”

Nejdánof took up his cap.

“Where are you going?” asked Mariánna.

“Why, there, of course,” he answered, without raising his eyes, and frowning, “to the district of T.”

“Then I shall come with you. You will take me,

will you not? Give me a moment to put on a kerchief."

"This is no woman's business," said Nejdánof, gloomily, still looking down as if he were angry.

"You are wrong! You do well to go, or Markélof would think you a coward. But I will go with you."

"I am not a coward," said Nejdánof, in the same tone.

"I meant that he would think us both cowards. I am going."

Mariánna went into her room to fetch her handkerchief, while Pável exclaimed softly, drawing in his breath, "Eh, eh!" and ran off instantly to let Solómin know.

Solómin entered the room before Mariánna had returned. Nejdánof was standing before the window, with his forehead resting on his hand, and his hand on the glass. He turned sharply when Solómin touched his shoulder. His look was wild and strange, for he had not washed and his hair was tangled. Solómin too had changed of late. He had grown yellower, his face was longer, and his upper teeth showed a little more. He also seemed excited, as far as his "well-balanced" mind could be.

"Markélof has not been able to restrain himself," he began. "This may end badly, both for him . . . and for others."

"I must go and see what is doing," said Nejdánof.

"And I too," said Mariánna, appearing on the threshold.

Solómin turned slowly towards her.

"I should advise you not, Mariánna. You may betray yourself, and us too, involuntarily, and without the slightest necessity. Let Nejdánof go and look about him to see what is happening; and even that must be with the greatest caution. But why should you?"

"I will not leave him."

"You will only tie his hands."

Mariánna glanced at Nejdánof, who was standing motionless, with a savage, immovable face.

"But if there is danger?" she asked.

Solómin smiled.

"Do not be afraid. When there is danger, I will let you go."

Mariánna removed the kerchief from her head in silence and sat down.

Then Solómin turned to Nejdánof.

"I think, brother, that you had really better go and see what is happening. Perhaps it is all exaggerated. Only be careful, please, and come back quick. By the way, I will send some one to drive you. Do you promise, Nejdánof?"

"Yes."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course. Does not every one here, from Mariánna downwards, obey you?"

Nejdánof went out into the passage without saying good-bye. Pável appeared out of a dark corner, and ran down the staircase before him, stumping on his iron heels. It was he who was to drive Nejdánof.

Solómin sat down by Mariánna.

"Did you hear Nejdánof's last words?" he asked.

"Yes. He is vexed that I listen to you more than to him. It is true I do. I love him, and obey you. He is dearer to me, and you are nearer."

Solómin touched her hand gently with his.

"This is a bad business," he at length went on. "If Markélof is mixed up in it he is lost."

Mariánna shuddered.

"Lost?"

"Yes. He does nothing by halves, and will not hide behind others."

"Lost!" again whispered Mariánna; and the tears

ran down her face. "Oh, Vasíli Fedótitsh, I am so sorry for him. But why should he not be successful? Why must he necessarily be lost?"

"Because, Mariánna, in such undertakings the first always perish, even if they are successful; and in the cause which he has taken up not only the first and second will perish, but even the tenth and the twentieth. . . ."

"So we shall not live to see it?"

"What you are thinking of? No. With these eyes we shall not behold it—with these, the eyes of the body. With the eyes of the mind, perhaps. That is another matter. Indulge yourself whenever you like. Now, if you will. To their sight there are no bounds."

"Then why do you, Solómin . . . ?"

"Why do I . . . ?"

"Follow that path?"

"Because there is no other. That is to say, our object is the same as Markélof's, but our paths are different."

"Poor Sergéi Mikháilovitch!" said Mariánna, sadly.

Solómin again touched her hand gently.

"Do not be too much cast down. We know nothing certain yet. We will see what news Pável brings. In our calling we must be firm. The English say, 'Never say die!' It is a good proverb. Better than ours: 'Woe has come; open the gates wide.' We must not lament beforehand."

Solómin rose.

"What of the situation you promised to find me?" suddenly asked Mariánna.

The tears were still shining on her cheeks, but the sorrowful expression had left her eyes.

Solómin sat down again.

"Why, are you in such a hurry to leave us?"

"Oh, no! but I want to be useful."

"You are very useful here, Mariánna. Do not leave

us. Wait a little. What do you want?" he asked Tatiána, who appeared at the door.

"There is a sort of female fellow outside asking for Alexéi Dmítritch," answered Tatiána, laughing and making gestures. "I tried to say that he was not here—never had been; that we knew nobody of the name; but he . . ."

"What he?"

"Why, this same female fellow. He took and wrote his name on this bit of paper here, and said I was to show it, and they would let him in; and that if Alexéi Dmítritch was really not at home, he would wait."

On the paper was written, in large capitals, "Mashúrina."

"Let her in," said Solómin. "She will not be in your way, will she, Mariánna, if she comes in here? She is one of us."

"Not in the least, of course."

A few moments later Mashúrina appeared on the threshold. She wore the same dress as we saw her in at the beginning of the first chapter.

CHAPTER XXXI.

“NEJDANOF is not at home?” she asked; then recognizing Solómin, went up and shook hands with him.

At Mariánna she only threw a side glance.

“He will soon be back,” answered Solómin. “But may I ask from whom you learnt . . . ?”

“From Markélof. Besides, two or three people in town already know it.”

“Really!”

“Yes. Somebody has let it out; and I was told Nejdánof had been recognized.”

“That is the use of your disguises!” grumbled Solómin. “Let me introduce you,” he added aloud. “Miss Sinétskaia—Miss Mashúrina. Take a seat.”

Mashúrina gave a little nod, and sat down.

“I have a letter for Nejdánof, and a verbal question to ask you, Solómin.”

“What is it? From whom?”

“From the person you wot of. Is all ready here?”

“Nothing is ready here.”

Mashúrina opened her little eyes as wide as she could.

“Nothing?”

“Nothing.”

"Absolutely nothing?"

"Absolutely nothing."

"And I am to say so?"

"And you are to say so."

Mashúrina took a cigarette from her pocket with a thoughtful air.

"Can you give me a light?"

"Here is a match."

Mashúrina lighted her cigarette.

"'They' expected something more," she began, "and round about things are different. However, that is your business. I shall not stay long with you—just to see Nejdánof and give him the letter."

"Where are you going then?"

"A long journey."

She was really going to Geneva, but did not wish to say so to Solómin. She thought him lukewarm; besides which a stranger was present. Mashúrina, who hardly knew a word of German, was going to Geneva to give a person she did not know one half of a piece of cardboard, with a vine-branch drawn on it, and two hundred and seventy-nine silver roubles.

"And where is Ostrodúmof?—with you?"

"No. He is not far off; but he will be found when he is wanted. Pímen will not be lost, no fear."

"How did you get here?"

"In a cart. How else should I? Give me another match?"

Solómin lighted a match and gave it her.

"Vasíli Fedótitch!" suddenly said a voice outside the door; "please come here!"

"Who is it? What is the matter?"

"Please come!" insisted the voice, in a pleading tone. "There are some strange workmen here saying something or other, and Pável Iegóritch is away."

Solómin excused himself and left the room.

Mashúrina looked at Mariánna so long that the latter began to feel uncomfortable.

"Excuse me," she said all at once in her rough, abrupt manner, "I am a plain girl, and do not know how to . . . to put things. . . . Don't be angry ; you need not answer me unless you like. Are you the person who ran away from the Sipiágins ?"

Mariánna was a little startled, but said,—

"Yes."

"With Nejdánof ?"

"Yes."

"Please give me your hand. Excuse me, you must be good if he loves you."

Mariánna shook her hand and said,—

"Do you know him intimately ?"

"I know him : I have seen him in Petersburg. That is why I asked ; and Sergéi Mikháilovitch also told me. . . ."

"Oh, Markélof ! have you seen him lately ?"

"Not long since. He is away now."

"Where has he gone ?"

"Where he was ordered to go."

Mariánna sighed. "Ah, Miss Mashúrina, I fear for him !"

"To begin with, please don't call me 'Miss' ; you must give up those ways. Secondly, you said, 'I fear' ; that will not do either. One must not fear for oneself, and one will give up fearing for others : one must neither think of oneself, nor fear for oneself. Only certainly I, Thékla Mashúrina, can afford to talk like that. I am ugly, while you are a beauty. So all this is harder for you." Mariánna looked down, and turned away her face. "Sergéi Mikháilovitch said,—he knew I had a letter for Nejdánof,—'Don't go to the factory,' he said ; 'don't take the letter ; it will spoil everything there ; leave them alone, they are happy ;

don't interfere with them!' So I would have gladly; but how about the letter?"

"Of course it must be delivered," said Mariánna. "But how good Sergéi Mikháilovitch is! Do you think he is really lost, Mashúrina? Will it be Siberia?"

"And suppose it were? Do people never escape from Siberia? And as for life, to some it is sweet, to others bitter. His life is not all refined sugar."

Mashúrina again looked attentively and inquiringly at Mariánna.

"You are really a beauty!" she at length exclaimed; "quite a little bird! But why doesn't Alexéi come? Shall I give you the letter? Why should I wait?"

"I will give it him, you may be sure."

Mashúrina rested her cheek on her hand, and looked at her long in silence.

"Tell me," she began, "excuse me—but do you love him very much?"

"I do."

Mashúrina tossed her hair back.

"I need not ask whether he loves you. But I must be going, or I shall be late. Tell him that I have been here, and give him my regards. Tell him Mashúrina has been here. You will not forget my name, will you?—Mashúrina. Oh, the letter—where have I put it?"

Mashúrina rose and turned away, making a pretence of hunting in her pockets. She quickly raised a little roll of paper to her mouth and swallowed it.

"Good gracious! how stupid of me. I cannot have lost it! But I have. Dear! dear! suppose any one found it! It is not here—no! So it has actually turned out as Sergéi Mikháilovitch wished."

"Look again," murmured Mariánna.

Mashúrina waved her hand.

"What is the use? It is lost!"

Mariánna went up to her.

"Kiss me!" she said.

Mashúrina caught hold of her with an unfeminine strength and hugged her to her breast.

"I would not have done it for any one else," she whispered hoarsely; "it is against my conscience . . . the first time! Tell him to be more prudent, and you too. Take care! There will soon be trouble here—trouble for all of us. Go away, both of you, for a time. . . . Good-bye!" she exclaimed aloud, and in a sharp tone, "and tell him. . . . No; it does not matter—nothing."

Mashúrina went out, slamming the door, and Mariánna remained standing in the middle of the room.

"What does it all mean?" she at last asked herself. "That woman loves him more than I do! And what does she mean by her hints? and why does not Solómin come back?"

She began to walk to and fro. A strange feeling, partly fear, partly vexation and astonishment, had seized her. Why had she not gone with Nejdánof? Solómin had dissuaded her; but where was he? and what was happening round her? Mashúrina had, of course, refrained from delivering the dangerous letter out of sympathy for Nejdánof. How could she have ventured on such an act of disobedience? She wanted to show her generosity. What right had she to do so? And why was she, Mariánna, so touched by this act? And was she really touched? An ugly woman takes an interest in a young man. There was, after all, nothing so wonderful in that! And why should Mashúrina imagine that Mariánna's affection for Nejdánof was stronger than her sense of duty? Possibly Mariánna did not at all appreciate this sacrifice. And what was in that letter?—a call to immediate action? Well, why not?"

“And Markélof? He is in danger, and what are we doing? Markélof is sparing us both, giving us the possibility of being happy, will not separate us! Is it also generosity—or contempt? Was it for this we left the hated house, to remain together, and coo like doves?”

So thought Mariánna, and her excitement and vexation increased every moment. Besides which her vanity was hurt. Why had every one—every one left her? That stout woman had called her a little bird, a beauty . . . why not a doll at once? And why had Nejdánof not gone alone, but with Pável, just as if he needed a guardian? And what were Solómin’s opinions? He was no true republican! But could any one really think that she was not serious in the cause?

These thoughts chased each other in whirling confusion through Mariánna’s heated brain. At length, clenching her teeth and folding her arms like a man, she sat down by the window and remained motionless, without leaning on the back of her chair: she was on the alert, every nerve strained, ready to spring up instantaneously. She would not go to Tatiána and work; she would only wait! So she waited doggedly, almost sullenly. Sometimes her own state of mind seemed to her strange and inexplicable. However, it was all the same! Once the idea even came into her head that she was doing all this from jealousy; but when she thought of poor Mashúrina’s appearance she shrugged her shoulders and made a gesture, as if to say, “How absurd!”—not an actual gesture, but a mental one.

She had to wait long; at length she heard the steps of two people climbing the staircase. She gazed steadily at the door as the steps approached. It opened, and Nejdánof, leaning on the arm of Pável, appeared on the threshold. He was deadly pale, and

had lost his cap ; his dishevelled hair fell in damp masses over his forehead ; he was looking straight before him and evidently saw nothing. Pável led him across the room (for his legs dragged feebly and uncertainly) and put him down on the sofa.

Mariánna had sprung from her seat.

“What is it ? What is the matter ? Is he ill ?”

But Pável, who was helping him, turned half round and answered over his shoulder with a smile, “Don’t be alarmed, if you please ; it will pass off directly ; it is only from want of habit.”

“But what is the matter ?” insisted Mariánna.

“He is a little drunk. He has taken it on an empty stomach ; so it upset him !”

Mariánna bent over Nejdánof. He was lying across the sofa, his head on his breast, his eyes vacant. He smelt of whiskey ; he was drunk.

“Alexéi !” broke from her lips.

He raised his heavy eyelids with an effort and tried to smile.

“Ah, Mariánna !” he muttered, “you are always saying ‘Sim . . . simpli . . . simplified,’ now I am simplified with a vengeance. Because the people is always drunk . . . so . . .”

He stopped, muttered a few unintelligible sounds, closed his eyes, and went to sleep. Pável laid him carefully on the sofa.

“Do not be alarmed, Mariánna Vikéntievna,” he repeated, “he will sleep a couple of hours and get up as if nothing had been.”

Mariánna wanted to ask how it had happened ; but her question would have detained Pável, and she wished to be alone, or rather she did not wish Pável to see him any longer before her in such a state. She walked to the window, and Pável, who at once understood, covered Nejdánof’s legs carefully with the skirts of his coat, put a pillow under his head, and

saying once more, "Never mind," went out on tiptoe. Mariánna looked round. Nejdánof's head had fallen heavily on the pillow ; on his pale face there was a fixed expression of painful conflict, as on that of one dangerously ill.

"How could it have happened ?" she thought.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THIS was how it had happened.

When Nejdánof had got into the cart with Pável he suddenly became very excited, and no sooner had they left the yard of the factory, and reached the high road, than he began to call to and stop all the peasants who passed, and to utter short, incoherent phrases: "Why do you sleep! Arise! It is time! Down with the taxes! Down with the landowners!" Some of the peasants looked at him with astonishment; others passed by without noticing him, thinking he was drunk; one, on reaching his cottage, told his people how he had met a Frenchman on the road, "who was shouting something I could not make out." Nejdánof had still sufficient wit left to understand how unspeakably stupid, and even senseless, what he was doing was; but he had gradually worked himself up to such a pitch that all action, stupid or wise, seemed alike to him. Pável tried to quiet him, saying that it was impossible to go on thus; that they would soon arrive at a large village, the first within the district of T., called "The Woman's Springs," and that there they might make inquiries But Nejdánof would not be quieted, and yet his face was, at the

same time, melancholy, almost desperate. They had a vigorous little horse, fat and strong, with a hog-mane on its arched neck ; it trotted along energetically on its sturdy little legs, and pulled at the reins as if it knew it was conveying people who were in a hurry. Before reaching The Woman's Springs, Nejdánof noticed eight peasants standing a little off the road before an open granary ; he sprang from the cart, ran up to them, and harangued them for some five minutes with sudden cries and wild gestures. The words "Freedom! Forward! Advance boldly!" could be heard amid a torrent of unintelligible language, poured out in a loud, hoarse voice. The peasants, who had collected at the granary to consult about putting some corn into it, if only for appearance' sake (it was a communal granary, therefore empty), gazed at Nejdánof, and listened to him apparently with great attention. Whether they understood anything is more doubtful, because, when he rushed away, after a final cry of "Freedom!" one, the sharpest among them, shook his head thoughtfully, and said, "How severe he is!" A second remarked, "Some official, eh?" whereon the sharp man replied, "We know what! He won't give himself a sore throat for nothing! Our money will have to weep for this!" Nejdánof himself, as he climbed into the cart, and sat down again by Pável, thought, "Heavens, what nonsense! But none of us know how to arouse the people ; perhaps, after all, this is the way. This is no time for reasoning. Go ahead! Never mind the heart-ache!"

They entered the village street. In the very centre, in front of a tavern, a good many people were standing. Pável tried to hold back Nejdánof, but he had already thrown himself headlong out of the cart, and with a shriek of "Brothers!" had rushed into the crowd. It opened for him, and Nejdánof again began

his speech without looking at any one, as if angry, and with tears in his eyes. But here the result was other than with the peasants at the granary. A gigantic young fellow, with a beardless but ferocious face, in a short, greasy sheepskin, high boots, and a lambswool cap, went up to Nejdánof and slapping him on the shoulder, cried in a piercing voice, "Capital, my fine fellow! But wait a bit; you know a dry spoon scrapes one's throat. Come along! It is much better for talking in here!" And he dragged Nejdánof into the tavern; the rest of the crowd poured in after them. "Mikhéitch," he cried, "look sharp; the ten-kopek stuff! My favourite! I am treating a friend. Who he is, of what folk or people, devil knows, but he lays it on to the masters capially! Drink!" he roared, turning to Nejdánof, and handing him a heavy glassful of liquor, all dripping as if with sweat, "Drink, if you are really for helping us poor peasants!" "Drink!" shouted the chorus. Nejdánof caught up the glass (he seemed half mad), and calling, "To you, my boys!" drank it at a draught. Ugh! He had drunk it with the same wild impulse with which he would have rushed on a battery or a row of bayonets. But what poison was this? Something seemed to shoot down his back and legs, to burn his throat, his chest, his stomach, to bring tears into his eyes. A shudder of aversion passed all over him, and he could hardly control himself. He cried out with all his might, to keep the nausea from rising. The dark room of the tavern seemed suddenly to grow hot and close; what a crowd there was in it! Nejdánof talked and talked, shouted angrily, fiercely; had to shake many broad palms, hard as horn, and kiss many unsavoury beards. The gigantic fellow in the sheepskin hugged him till he almost broke his ribs. He seemed a sort of monster. "I will wring any one's neck," he howled, "who insults our brothers,

or smash his head in! He shall yell for it! I have been a butcher; I know how to do that sort of thing!" whereon he showed his huge fist, covered with freckles. And again, oh Heavens! some one shouted "Drink!" and again Nejdánof drank that horrible poison. The second time it was dreadful. It was as if his inside had been torn with blunt hooks. His head swam, and green circles flitted across his sight. There was a noise, a humming in his ears. Oh, horror! A third measure. Impossible that he could have swallowed it! He saw a confused mass of red noses, dusty hair, sunburnt faces and necks, with deep wrinkles ploughed across them. Hard fists gripped him. "Go on!" roared the relentless voices. "Talk! ~~We had another fool like this yesterday, who was rare fun. Go on, you . . .!~~" The earth reeled under Nejdánof's feet. His own voice sounded strange to him, as if it came from without. Was this death, or what?

Suddenly . . . a feeling of fresh air on his face, and no more crush, nor red faces, nor heat from the wine, from the sheepskins, the tar, the leather . . . He is again sitting on the cart by Pável. At first he struggles, and cries out,—

"Stop! Where are you going? I have not had time to tell them anything; we must explain. . . ." Then he added, "And you, you devil, you yourself, you cunning man, what do you think?"

Whereon Pável answers,—

"It would be a good thing if there were no masters and the land were all ours—a first-rate thing; but there has been no ukaze to say so yet"; and he turns the horse round quietly, and suddenly strikes it over the back with the reins, and away at full gallop from all the noise and the yells, and back towards the factory.

Nejdánof is dozing, and is rocked, and the wind

blows pleasantly in his face, and keeps dark thoughts away.

But he is vexed that he had not time to say all he wanted. . . . And again the wind cools his heated face.

Then for a moment a glimpse of Mariánna—for a moment a burning feeling of shame; then sleep, heavy, death-like sleep. . . .

Pável told Solómin all this. He did not conceal that he allowed Nejdánof to drink, otherwise he could not have got him away. The others would not have let him off.

“Well, then he got very weak; so I bowed to them, and asked them, ‘Good gentlemen, let the lad go; you see he is over young yet.’ So they let him go, only they said, ‘Give us half a rouble ransom!’ So I gave it them.”

“And quite right too,” said Solómin.

Nejdánof slept, and Mariánna sat by the window and gazed into the enclosure; and, strange to say, the unpleasant, almost evil feelings and thoughts which had beset her before Nejdánof’s arrival with Pável had left her all at once. Nejdánof did not appear repulsive or disgusting to her: she only pitied him. She knew quite well that he was not dissolute or a drunkard, and she was already thinking of what she should say to him when he woke—something friendly and kindly, that he might not reproach himself too bitterly.

“I must do that; he must tell me himself how all this misfortune happened to him.”

She was not excited, but sad, unspeakably sad. A breath of air seemed to have passed over her—a foretaste of that world which was her goal, and she shrank from its darkness and coarseness; to what Moloch was she sacrificing herself?

But no, it could not be! No, it was but an acci-

dent, and would pass off directly. It was the impression of a moment, which had only struck her because it was so unexpected.

So she rose, went up to the sofa on which Nejdánof was lying, wiped his forehead, which even in his sleep was painfully contracted, smoothed back his hair. . . .

Again she pitied him, as a mother pities her sick child. But the sight of him distressed her ; so she went into her room, leaving the door open.

She left her work untouched, but sat down, and the same thoughts filled her mind. She felt time flying, one minute after another, and the feeling was not unpleasant ; her heart beat fast, and she waited—still waited for something.

“Where was Solómin ?”

The door creaked slightly, and Tatiána came in.

“What do you want ?” asked Mariánna, almost irritably.

“Mariánna Vikéntievna,” began Tatiána, in a low tone, “you are not in a way about it, I hope ; because, you see, it is a common thing, and thank God that . . .”

“I am not in the least ‘in a way,’ Tatiána Osípovna,” interrupted Mariánna. “Alexéi Dmítritch is not very well ; that is no great matter.”

“That is right. It was only that I was thinking, ‘Why does not my Mariánna Vikéntievna come ?’ and thinking what can be the matter with her. But I would not have come to you, for at such times this is a good rule: ‘Don’t meddle.’ Only some sort of man, deuce knows who (a little lame fellow), has come to the factory and, will he, nill he, will see Alexéi Dmítritch. Here are wonders : that woman this morning, and now this lame man. And if Alexéi Dmítritch is not here, he must see Vasíli Fedótitch ! He won’t go away without, he says ; because, he says, it’s very important. We wanted to send him away, like the woman. Vasíli

Fedótitch is really not in ; he has gone out. But the lame man says he won't go away—will stay till night, if he must ; and there he is, walking about the yard. Come here into the passage ; you can see him out of the window. You may know who this gentleman is.”

Mariánna followed Tatiána. She had to pass by Nejdánof, and again noticed his contracted forehead, and passed her handkerchief over it. Through the dusty little window she could see the visitor of whom Tatiána had spoken. She did not know him. But at that moment Solómin came round the corner.

The little lame man went quickly up to him and gave him his hand, which Solómin took. He evidently knew him. They both passed out of sight.

A moment more, and their steps resounded on the staircase ; they were coming up.

Mariánna went quickly back into her room, and stood in the middle of it, breathing with difficulty. She felt afraid of what ? She herself did not know.

Solómin's head appeared in the doorway.

“ May I come in, Mariánna Vikéntievna ? I have brought a person, whom you must absolutely see.”

Mariánna only nodded in answer, and following Solómin there entered—Páklin.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

“I AM a friend of your husband,” he said, bowing deeply before Mariáanna as if to conceal his alarmed and agitated face, “and also of Vasíli Fedótitch. Alexéi Dmítritch is asleep ; I hear he is not well, and unfortunately I have brought bad news which I have already communicated in part to Vasíli Fedótitch, and in consequence of which some decisive measures will have to be taken.”

Páklin’s voice failed him at each instant like that of a man tormented by thirst. The news of which he was the bearer were really very bad. Markélof had been seized by some peasants and taken to the town. The proselyte clerk had betrayed Golouúshkin, who had been arrested, and in his turn was betraying everything and everybody ; he had expressed his intention of being converted to the orthodox faith, had given a portrait of the Metropolitan Philarét to the gymnasium, and 5,000 roubles to be distributed among “the wounded warriors.” There could be no doubt that he had denounced Nejdánof ; the police might invade the factory at any moment. Vasíli Fedótitch was also in danger. “As for me,” added Páklin, “I only marvel how it is that I am still at liberty, although I really never occupied myself with politics, and never took

part in any of your plans. I have taken advantage of the negligence or stupidity of the police to warn you and help you to consider what means may be taken . . . to avoid misfortune."

Mariánna let Páklin finish all he had to say. She was not frightened; she even appeared calm. But she felt that something must indeed be done. Her first impulse was to look at Solómin.

He too seemed calm, only the muscles round his lips were twitching slightly, and his usual smile had left him.

He understood the meaning of Mariánna's look; she was waiting for what he would say, to act accordingly.

"The matter is indeed rather a ticklish one," he began; "I should think it would not be amiss for Nejdánof to hide for a time. By the way, how did you learn he was here, Mr. Páklin?"

Páklin waved his hand.

"Oh, from a certain individual who had seen him walking about the neighbourhood and preaching. So he followed him, though with no bad intention, for he is a sympathizer. Excuse me," he added, turning to Mariánna, "but our friend Nejdánof was very . . . very imprudent."

"It is of no use blaming him now," said Solómin. "It is a pity we cannot consult him, but by to-morrow his indisposition will have passed off, and the police is not as expeditious as you think. You too, Mariánna Vikéntievna, will have to leave us for a while."

"Of course," answered Mariánna, in a hoarse but firm voice.

"Yes," continued Solómin, "we must look about and consider where we can go and how to get away."

"Let me suggest an idea," began Páklin. "It came into my head as I was driving here. I may remark

that I dismissed my *isvostshik** a verst from here."

"What is your idea?" asked Solómin.

"Why, this? Give me a conveyance and horses, and I will hasten to the Sipiágin."

"To the Sipiágin!" exclaimed Mariáanna. "What for?"

"You will see."

"Do you know them?"

"Not in the least. But listen. Consider my idea carefully. To me it seems quite a stroke of genius. Markélof is Sipiágin's brother-in-law, is he not? Well, surely that gentleman will do something to save him. Besides which, Nejdánof—admitting that Sipiágin is angry with him—still Nejdánof has become his relation by his marriage with you. And the danger which is hanging over our friend's head"

"I am not married," remarked Mariáanna.

Páklin absolutely shuddered.

"What? Have you allowed all this time to pass without being married? Never mind, I can tell a few fibs. It will come to the same, for you will marry him now. There really is nothing else to be done. Just consider. Up to this time Sipiágin has not followed you. So he has yet some feeling of generosity left. I see you object to that expression, so I will substitute, 'some wish to save appearances.' Why should you not take advantage of it at such a moment? Just consider!"

Mariáanna raised her head and passed her hand over her hair.

"You may take any advantage you please for Markélof, Mr. Páklin or for yourself; but Alexéi and I desire neither intercession nor protection from Mr. Sipiágin. We did not leave his house to come back as suppliants to his door. We care neither for

* Cabman.

the generosity nor the wish to save appearances of Mr Sipiágin or his wife."

"That is a most praiseworthy sentiment," answered Páklin (thinking at the same time, "What a *douche* cold water she has given me, eh!"), "although if you come to think of it However, I will obey you. I will only intercede for Markélof, our good friend Markélof. I may remark, however, that he is Sipiágin's relation not by blood, but through his wife, whereas you"

"Mr. Páklin, I beg of you!"

"I have done, I have done! only I cannot but express my regret, because Sipiágin is a very influential man."

"Have you no fears for yourself?" said Solómin.

Páklin struck an attitude.

"At such a moment one does not think of oneself," he said, proudly. But it was just of himself that he was thinking. Poor little feeble creature, he was trying like a hare to get a good start. If he did Sipiágin a service, a word might be said in his favour if there were any necessity for it. For, whatever he might pretend, he was mixed up in it—he had listened—he had even chattered!

"I think your idea is not a bad one," said Solómin, after a pause, "though I have not much faith in its success. At all events, you might try. You cannot spoil anything."

"Of course not. Suppose the worst, they can only turn me out of the house. No great harm in that!"

"Not the smallest harm. . . ." ("Merci!" thought Páklin; and Solómin continued) "What o'clock is it? Past four. You have no time to lose. You shall have horses in a minute. Pável!"

But, instead of Pável, Nejdánof appeared on the threshold. He was unsteadily holding on to the door-

post for support, and, with his mouth vaguely open, was looking around with a vacant gaze. He evidently understood nothing.

Páklin went up to him.

"Aliósha!" he exclaimed, "do you know me?"

Nejdánof looked at him, blinking slowly.

"Páklin?" he at length said.

"Yes, yes, it is I. You are not well?"

"No, not well. But why are you here?"

"Why?" But at that moment Mariánna gently touched Páklin's elbow. He looked round and saw she was making signs to him. "Oh, yes!" he muttered; "true. Well you see, Aliósha," he added, aloud, "I have come about some important business, and am going further directly. Solómin will tell you all about it, and Mariánna. . . . Vikéntievna. They both entirely approve of my intentions. It is a matter which concerns us all. No, no, I mean," he corrected himself in answer to a look and a sign from Mariánna, "it concerns Markélof, our common friend Markélof—him alone. But good-bye! Every moment is precious; good-bye, my friend! We shall meet again soon. Vasíli Fedótitch, will you be good enough to come with me and arrange about the horses?"

"Certainly. Mariánna, I wanted to say to you, be firm. But it is not necessary. You are of the right sort, you are!"

"That you are," said Páklin. "A Roman woman of the days of Cato! Cato of Utica! But come along, Vasíli Fedótitch, come along!"

"Time enough," answered Solómin, with his lazy smile. Nejdánof moved aside a little to let them pass. . . . But his eyes had still the same vague expression. Then he took a step or two, and sat down on a chair, with his face to Mariánna.

"Alexéi," she said, "all is discovered. Markélof

has been seized by the peasants whom he was inciting to revolt ; and he is in prison in the town as well as that merchant with whom you dined, and probably the police will soon be here after us. Páklin has gone to the Sipiágins."

"What for?" asked Nejdánof, in a whisper. But his eyes had brightened, and his face had resumed its usual expression. The effects of the drink had passed away for a moment.

"To see if he will not intercede."

Nejdánof started. "For us?"

"No; for Markélof. He wished to include us also, but I would not let him. Was I right, Alexéi?"

"Were you right?" said Nejdánof, stretching out his hands to her, without rising from his chair; "were you right?" he repeated, and drawing her towards him he buried his head in her dress and burst into tears.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed Mariánna. As she had done that time when he fell before her on his knees, panting and choking from a sudden outburst of passion, so now she laid both her hands on his trembling head. But her feelings now were quite different from then. Then she obeyed him, gave herself up to him, only waited for him to say the word. Now she pitied him, and her only thought was how she might soothe him.

"What is it?" she repeated. "Why are you crying? Surely not because you came home . . . in that state? No! Or are you pitying Markélof? or do you fear for me or yourself? or do you regret the ruin of our hopes? You surely did not expect everything to go as on well-greased wheels?"

Nejdánof suddenly raised his head.

"No, Mariánna," he said, checking his sobs, "I do not fear for you or for myself. But I do pity. . . ."

"Whom?"

"You, Mariánna! I pity you for uniting your fate to that of a man who is not worthy."

"Why not?"

"Why... were it only because at such a moment he is capable of crying!"

"It is not you who are crying; it is your nerves!"

"My nerves and I are the same thing. Listen, Mariánna; can you look me in the eyes and tell me that you do not repent..."

"Of what?"

"Of having followed me?"

"I do not."

"And you would follow me still further—anywhere?"

"Yes."

"Yes? Mariánna! yes?"

"Yes. I gave you my hand, and as long as you remain the same as when I began to love you I will not take it back."

Nejdánof was still sitting on the chair; Mariánna was standing in front of him. His arms were round her; her hands were resting on his shoulders. "She says, 'Yes' and 'No,'" thought Nejdánof, "and yet when I have been holding her in my arms before her body remained motionless, if nothing more; now I feel that, though perhaps involuntarily, it draws away from me."

He opened his arms, and Mariánna did indeed recede almost imperceptibly.

"Now!" he said, aloud. "If we must fly, before the police arrives, I think we should do well to get married. Elsewhere we may not always find such an accommodating priest as Zósima!"

"I am ready," said Mariánna.

Nejdánof looked hard at her. "The Roman woman!" he said, with an unpleasant sneer. "The sense of duty!"

Mariánna shrugged her shoulders.

"We must tell Solómin," she said.

"Oh Solómin. . . . Yes" said Nejdánof, slowly. "But he is in danger too. The police will arrest him as well. I fancy he has played a greater part even than I have, and knows more."

"I cannot tell," answered Mariánna. "He never talks of himself."

"Not like me!" thought Nejdánof. "That is what she means. Solómin Solómin!" he said, after a long pause. "Do you know, Mariánna, I should not have pitied you if the man to whom you had tied yourself for life were like Solómin, or were Solómin himself!"

Mariánna, in her turn, looked hard at Nejdánof.

"You had no right to say that," she at length said.

"I had no right? How am I to understand that? Do you mean that you love me, or generally that I ought not to have touched that subject?"

"You had no right," repeated Mariánna.

Nejdánof looked down.

"Mariánna!" he said, in a voice which had somewhat changed.

"What is it?"

"If, now if I were to ask you that question—you know what? No, I don't ask anything. . . . Good-bye!"

He rose and went out. Mariánna did not prevent him. He sat down on the sofa in his own room, and hid his face in his hands. His own thoughts frightened him, and he did his best not to think. He felt as if an unseen hand beneath the earth had grasped the very root of his existence, never again to let go. He knew that the good, the dear being in the next room would not come to him, and he did not dare

go in to her. And why should he? What should he say?

A quick, firm step made him open his eyes. Solómit crossed his room, and, knocking at Mariánna's door went in.

“Honour and place!”

The relieved sentinel's watchword came to Nejdánot's mind, and he whispered it bitterly to himself.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It was already ten o'clock in the evening, and Sipiágin, his wife, and Kálloméitsef were playing at cards in the drawing-room of the house of Arjánoc, when a servant came in and announced that a strange gentleman—a Mr. Páklin—wished to see Bóris Andréitch on a most pressing and important matter.

"At such an hour!" exclaimed Valentína Mikháilovna, in astonishment.

"What?" asked Bóris Andréitch, twitching his well-shaped nose. "What did you say the gentleman's name was?"

"Páklin, he said, sir."

"Páklin!" exclaimed Kálloméitsef. "A good country name that. Páklin Solómin* de vrais noms ruraux, hein?"

"And you say," continued Bóris Andréitch, with the same twitch in his nose, "that his business is important, pressing?"

"So the gentleman says, sir."

"Hum! some beggar or intriguer" ("Or both," broke in Kálloméitsef). "Very likely. Show him into my study." He rose. "Pardon, ma bonne. Have

* Paklia means oakum in Russian ; Soloma, straw.

a game at *écarté* meanwhile ; or wait for me. I shall be back directly."

"Nous causerons : . . . allez !" said Kalloméitsef.

When Sipiágin entered his study and saw Páklin's wretched, miserable figure, cowering humbly in the corner between the fireplace and the door, he experienced that truly ministerial feeling of lofty pity and rather disgusted condescension which is peculiar to the great men of Petersburg.

"Heavens !" he thought ; "what a wretched little snipe of a being, and lame too, I think !"

"Take a seat," he said aloud, employing the most condescending tones of his baritone voice, and nodding his erect little head pleasantly. He himself sat down before his guest. "You must be tired after your journey. Sit down and explain what the important business is which has brought you here at so late an hour !"

"Your Excellency," began Páklin, sitting down timidly on the edge of an armchair, "I have ventured to come here . . ."

"Stop a moment," said Sipiágin. "I have seen you before. I never forget a face which I have once seen : I always remember faces. Where, now, where have I met you before ?"

"You are not mistaken, your Excellency. I had the honour of meeting you at Petersburg, in the rooms of a man who . . . since, . . . unfortunately, has aroused your displeasure . . ."

Sipiágin rose hastily.

"At Mr. Nejdánof's ! I remember now. It is not from him you have come, I hope ?"

"Not at all, your Excellency. On the contrary . . ."

Sipiágin reseated himself.

"Fortunately. Because, in that case, I should have asked you to leave the house at once. I can admit of no intercourse between Mr. Nejdánof and myself. He

has offended me in a way which cannot be forgotten. . . . I am above revenge ; but I will have nothing more to do with him or with that girl—more depraved, however, in mind than in heart” (Sipiágin had repeated this phrase some thirty times since Mariánna’s flight)—“who did not shrink from leaving the roof which had sheltered her to become the mistress of a houseless tramp! Let them think themselves fortunate that I have forgotten them!”

At these words Sipiágin waved his hand upwards away from himself.

“I have forgotten them, sir!”

“Your Excellency, I have told you that I do not come in their name, although I may inform your Excellency that they are already joined by the bonds of lawful matrimony.” (“It is all the same,” thought Páklin. “I said I should have to tell lies. There is one. What next?”)

Sipiágin rubbed his neck against the back of his chair.

“That does not interest me in the least, my dear sir. There is one more foolish marriage in the world, that is all. But what is the most important affair to which I am indebted for the pleasure of your visit?”

“Oh, you head of a department!” thought Páklin. “I will give you something for showing yourself off like that, you well-shorn Englishman!”

“Your wife’s brother,” he said aloud, “Mr. Markélof, has been seized by the peasants whom he had incited to revolt, and is now imprisoned in the governor’s residence.”

Sipiágin again sprang up.

“What—what do you say?” he stammered, in no ministerial baritone this time, but in a kind of feeble-tenor.

“I said that your brother-in-law had been taken, and was in prison. As soon as I learnt it, I engaged a

conveyance and came to tell you. I thought I might be rendering a service both to you and to that unhappy man, whom you may yet save !”

“I am much obliged to you,” said Sipiágin, in the same feeble voice, and brought the palm of his hand down upon a little bell in the shape of a mushroom, which filled the house with its metallic ring. “I am much obliged to you,” he repeated, more vigorously ; “but I may tell you, a man who has had the audacity to break all the laws of God and man, were he a hundred times my relation, in my eyes is not unhappy, he is a criminal !”

A footman rushed into the room.

“Your orders, sir !”

“A carriage ! A carriage and four directly. I am going into town ; Philíp and Stepán with me.” The servant disappeared. “Yes, sir, my brother-in-law is a criminal, and I am going to town,—not with the purpose of saving him—oh, no !”

“But, your Excellency . . .”

“Such is my rule of conduct, sir, and I beg you not to trouble me with your arguments !”

Sipiágin began to pace up and down his study, while Páklin opened his eyes wide. “Oh, the deuce !” he thought ; “people said you were a liberal ! Why, you are a roaring lion !”

The door flew open, and Valentína Mikháilovna, followed by Kalloméitsef, entered hastily.

“What is it, Borís ? You have ordered a carriage—you are going into town. What has happened ?”

Sipiágin took his wife by the arm between the wrist and the elbow. “Il faut vous armer de courage, ma chère. Your brother is arrested.”

“Seriója ! * What for ?”

“For preaching socialistic theories to the peasantry.” (Kalloméitsef gave a slight groan.) “Yes. He was

* Diminutive of Sergéi.

preaching a revolution, inciting them to rebel! They seized him, and gave him up! He is now in prison—in the town.”

“Oh, the madman! But who has told you all this?”

“This . . . this gentleman . . . what’s his name? Mr. Konopátin * . . . has brought the news.”

Valentína Mikháilovna glanced at Páklin, who bowed in a humble manner. (“What a fine woman!” he thought. Even at such a moment, how amenable Páklin was to the influence of female beauty!)

“And you are going into town?”

“It is not too late to find the governor up.”

“I always prophesied it would end so,” broke in Kalloméitsef. “It could not be otherwise. But what fine fellows our Russian peasants are! Capital! Pardon, madame, c’est votre frère,—mais la vérité avant tout!”

“You cannot really intend to go, Borís?” asked Valentína Mikháilovna.

“I am convinced too,” continued Kalloméitsef, “that that tutor, Mr. Nejdánof, is mixed up in this. J’en mettrais ma main au feu. It is all the same band. He has not been taken? You do not know?”

Sipiágin again waved his hand.

“I do not know, and do not care to know! By the way,” he added turning to his wife, “il paraît qu’ils sont mariés.”

“Who told you? This gentleman too?” Valentína Mikháilovna again looked at Páklin, but this time with a slight frown.

“Yes.”

“In that case,” broke in Kalloméitsef, “of course he knows where they are. Do you know where they are? Do you know where they are—eh? Do you know—

* Konopatit means to stuff with oakum. Sipiágin confounds the two words.

eh?" Kalloméitsef began to dance about in front of Páklin, as if he wished to bar the way, though the latter showed not the smallest inclination to escape. "Come, speak, answer! Do you know?"

"If I did know," answered Páklin, in a nettled tone,—his wrath had accumulated, and his eyes were gleaming,—“if I did know, I should not tell you!”

"Oh, that is it, is it?" exclaimed Kalloméitsef. "Do you hear? Why this man, too, must be one of the same band!"

"The carriage is ready," announced a servant.

Sipiágin caught up his hat with a fine energetic flourish, but Valentína Mikháilovna begged him so earnestly to put it off till the morning, she gave him such convincing reasons—it was dark, and everybody in town would be asleep, and he would only ruin his nerves and might catch cold—that Sipiágin at last agreed, exclaiming,—

"I obey!" and replaced his hat on the table with a flourish, quite as fine, but this time not so energetic.

"Take out the horses," he ordered, "and let it be ready to-morrow morning at six precisely. Do you hear? Go! Stop! Send away this . . . this gentleman's droshky. Pay the driver! I think you are saying something, Mr. Konopátin? I will take you with me to-morrow, Mr. Konopátin. What do you say?—didn't hear. You drink vodka? Give Mr. Konopátin some vodka. No, you don't? In that case . . . Feódor, show this gentleman to the Green Room. Good night, Mr. Kono . . ."

Páklin at last lost his temper.

"Páklin!" he roared,—“my name is Páklin!”

"Yes, yes; it is all the same. It is very like it, you see. But what a loud voice you have for so small a person! Till to-morrow, Mr. Páklin—is that right Siméon, vous viendrez avec nous?"

“ Je crois bien.”

So Páklin was shown to the Green Room, and he was even locked in. As he lay down he heard the key turn with a ringing snap in the English lock. He rated himself soundly for his “stroke of genius,” and slept very badly.

The next morning he was called at half-past five. Coffee was brought him. While he drank it, the servant, with a parti-coloured epaulette on his shoulder, waited, holding the tray and resting first on one leg, then on the other, as if to say, “Look sharp; the masters are waiting for you.” Then he was taken downstairs. The carriage was already waiting at the front door, as was Kalloméitsef’s phaeton. Sipiágin appeared on the threshold in a camelot cloak with a round collar. Such cloaks no one now wore, except a certain statesman of very high rank, whom Sipiágin endeavoured to flatter by imitation; so on important official occasions he wore this cloak.

Sipiágin bowed to Páklin graciously enough, and, indicating the carriage by a brisk movement of his hand, asked him to be seated.

“Mr. Páklin, you are coming with me, Mr. Páklin. Put Mr. Páklin’s bag on the box. I am taking Mr. Páklin to town,” he repeated, laying stress on the word “Páklin,” and especially on the “a.” He seemed to say, “You are blessed with such a name as that, and yet you object to having it changed! Well, you shall have enough of it, then. Here, eat it, stuff yourself with it!” “Páklin!” “Mr. Páklin!” the unfortunate name rang through the fresh morning air.

It was so fresh that Kalloméitsef, who appeared behind Sipiágin, exclaimed several times “Brrr” “Brrr” and wrapped his cloak tighter round him as he took his seat in his elegant carriage with the hood thrown back. (His poor friend, Mikháil Obrénovitch, the Prince of Servia, on seeing it had bought a similar

one of Binder, "Vous savez, Binder, le grand carrossier des Champs-Élysées!")

From behind the half-opened shutters of her bedroom peeped Valentína Mikháilovna in a cap, and with a shawl over her shoulders.

Sipiágin, as he took his seat, waved his hand to her.

"Are you comfortable, Mr. Páklin? Drive on!"

"Je vous recommande mon frère; épargnez-le!" called out Valentína Mikháilovna.

"Soyez tranquille!" exclaimed Kalloméitsef, casting a self-satisfied glance upwards at her from under the peak of a travelling-cap with a cockade, which he had invented himself. . . . "C'est surtout l'autre qu'il faut pincer!"

"Drive on!" repeated Sipiágin. "Mr. Páklin, you are not cold, are you? Drive on!"

The carriages started.

For the first ten minutes both Sipiágin and Páklin remained silent. The unhappy Síloushka, in his threadbare great-coat and crumpled cap, seemed even more miserable by comparison with the rich dark-blue silk lining of the carriage. He looked round at the delicate light-blue blinds, which flew up swiftly at the mere touch of a finger on the spring; at the rug of the whitest and fluffiest lamb's wool at his feet, at the mahogany box, with a movable desk, and even a little stand for books, which was fitted in front. (Borís Andréitch, without actually working, wished to make others believe that, like Thiers, he worked while travelling.)

Páklin felt ill at ease. Sipiágin glanced at him once or twice over his marvellously clean-shaven cheek; then, taking out of his pocket a silver case with an elaborate monogram in Slavonic characters, offered . . . yes, actually offered him a cigar, which he held lightly between his first and second fingers, clad in a yellow English dog-skin glove.

"I do not smoke," said Páklin.

"Oh!" answered Sipiágin, and lighted the cigar, which proved to be an excellent regalia. "I must tell you, my dear Mr. Páklin," he began, puffing delicately, and emitting long straight streams of odorous smoke, "that I am really . . . very much . . . obliged to you . . . I may yesterday . . . have seemed to you . . . rather abrupt . . . which it is not in . . . my nature to be" (Sipiágin intentionally broke up his sentences) "I can assure you. But, Mr. Páklin, put yourself in my position." (Sipiágin rolled his cigar from one corner of his mouth to the other.) "The rank I hold . . . puts me . . . as it were . . . before the world; and then . . . my brother-in-law . . . compromises himself . . . and me . . . in such an impossible manner! Eh, Mr. Páklin? You, perhaps, think that is nothing!"

"I do not think so, your Excellency!"

"You do not know exactly for what and where they arrested him?"

"I heard it was in the district of T. . . ."

"From whom did you hear it?"

"From a man."

"Well, not from a bird, I suppose. What man?"

"From an assistant of the chief of the governor's private office."

"What is his name?"

"The chief's?"

"No, the assistant's?"

"Uliashévitch. He is a very good official, your Excellency. As soon as I heard of the occurrence I came to inform you."

"Yes, yes. I repeat that I am much obliged to you. But what madness, is it not, Mr. Páklin?"

"Simple madness!" exclaimed Páklin, and he felt the warm perspiration run down his back like a snake. "It shows," he continued, "an absolute incapacity to

understand our Russian peasant. Mr. Markélof, as far as I know, is good and honourable at heart; but he never did understand the Russian peasant." Páklin glanced at Sipiágin, who had turned slightly towards him, and was examining him with a cold but not hostile look. "Even to incite the Russian peasant to rebellion, one must take advantage of his devotion to the powers that rule him, to the Imperial family. Some legend must be invented, as in the case of the False Dimíttri; or the pretender must show some marks of his rank on his chest, burnt with red-hot coins, bearing the Imperial eagle. . . ."

"Yes, yes, like Pugatchéf," interrupted Sipiágin, in a tone which was meant to say, "We have not forgotten our history yet; don't try to show off!" He added, "It is madness, madness!" and seemed wrapped in contemplation of the little stream of smoke which was curling quickly up from the tip of his cigar.

"Your Excellency!" said Páklin, taking courage, "I told you just now that I did not smoke; but it was not true; I do smoke, and your cigar smells so delicious. . . ."

"Eh, what, what?" said Sipiágin, as if rousing himself from a reverie, and, without giving Páklin time to repeat what he had said, handed him his open cigar-case, showing clearly that he had heard what was said, and had only asked the question for the form.

Páklin lighted his cigar directly, and with an expression of thankfulness.

"Now is the favourable moment, I should say," he thought, but Sipiágin forestalled him.

"You spoke also, I think," he said carelessly, in broken sentences, inspecting his cigar and pushing his hat from the back of his head on to his forehead; "you did, didn't you? . . . about that friend of yours. . .

... who married my... relative. You see them often. They live not far from here, I think?"

"Eh!" thought Páklin. "Síla, my friend, be careful!"

"I have only seen them once, your Excellency. They do live... not very far from here."

"Of course you understand," continued Sipiágin, in the same tone, "that I can take no serious interest, as I have already explained to you, in that wayward girl, or in your friend. I have no prejudices, Heaven knows, but that is really going too far. It is senseless, you know. However, I believe it was more sympathy in politics" ("politics!" he repeated, with a shrug) "that united them than any other feeling."

"I quite agree with you, your Excellency!"

"Yes, Mr. Nejdánof was a thorough 'red.' To do him justice, he did not conceal his opinions."

"Nejdánof," hazarded Páklin, "was led away, perhaps, but his heart is..."

"Good," broke in Sipiágin: "of course it is, of course, like Markélof's. All these gentry have excellent hearts. I suppose he, too, has taken a part in this, and will probably be arrested. I shall have to intercede for him as well!"

Páklin put his hands together in an imploring attitude. "Oh, do, your Excellency! Grant him your protection! Truly, truly, he is worthy of your sympathy."

Sipiágin smiled.

"You think so?"

"And even if not for him... for your relation's sake... his wife." ("Good God!" thought Páklin, "what lies I am telling!")

Sipiágin half closed his eyes.

"I see you are a very faithful friend. It is a good thing, a very praiseworthy thing, my dear sir. So you say they live not far from here?"

"Yes, your Excellency, in a large factory..." Páklin bit his tongue.

Sipiágin made a noise with his lips.

"Te, te, te, te. . . at Solómin's, of course. I kne it, I had been told; I had forgotten. Oh, of course. (Sipiágin did not know it in the least, and no one ha ever told him, but remembering Solómin's visit, an their conversation in the evening, he threw out th bait. . . Páklin swallowed it instantly.)

"As you know," he began, and again broke o hurriedly. But it was too late. Only from the loo which Sipiágin cast at him, he understood that th latter had been playing with him all this time as cat does with a mouse.

"But, your Excellency," stammered the unhapp man, "I am bound to tell you that I know nothing. . ."

"But I am not questioning you! Good Heavens what an idea! What do you take me for? and you self as well?" exclaimed Sipiágin haughtily, an again shrouded himself in the Olympus of hi ministerial dignity.

Páklin felt once more how wretched, how miserable how entrapped he was. . . Up to that moment h had kept his cigar in the corner of his mouth furthes from Sipiágin, and had puffed out the smoke discreetly to one side; now he took it out of his mout and stopped smoking altogether.

"Good God!" he groaned inwardly, and the warri perspiration ran down him quicker than ever, "wha have I done! I have betrayed everything and every body. . . I have been befooled, bought with a goo cigar! I am an informer; and how can I undo th harm now? Good God!"

It was impossible to undo the harm. Sipiágin wrapped in his official cloak, had begun to doze wit gravity and dignity, also as became a ministe Besides which in less than a quarter of an hour bot carriages stopped before the governor's house.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE governor of the province of S. belonged to that class of good-natured, indolent, and worldly generals, blessed with marvellously clean white skins, and minds nearly as white; are well born, well educated, and well kneaded, if one may so say; they never set up to be "shepherds of the people," yet display very fair administrative capacities; and while they do little work, eternally sigh after Petersburg, and pay court to the pretty provincial dames, they undoubtedly benefit their province and leave a good name behind them. He had just risen and was sitting before a mirror in a silk dressing-gown with his night-gown unfastened, and was rubbing his face and neck with eau de cologne and water, having first taken off a whole collection of images and amulets; at this moment the arrival of Sipiágin and Kalloméitsef, on important and urgent business, was announced to him. With Sipiágin he was very intimate; he had known him from his youth, had constantly met him in the drawing-rooms of Petersburg, and of late, whenever he thought of him, gave a mental ejaculation, "Ah!" of respect, as if he saw in him a future dignitary. Kalloméitsef he did not know so well,

and had much less respect for him, especially as several unpleasant complaints had been made against him within a short time; still he counted him as man—*qui fera son chemin*—somehow.

He ordered his visitors to be shown into his cabinet and at once joined them there, still in his dressing gown; he made no excuses for receiving them in so unofficial a costume, but shook their hands in a friendly manner. Sipiágin and Kalloméitsef had alone entered the governor's cabinet; Páklin had remained in the drawing-room. On alighting from the carriage he had tried to slip away, muttering an excuse that he had business at home, but Sipiágin had prevented him, politely yet firmly, and had brought him in. (Kalloméitsef had rushed up and whispered to Sipiágin, "Ne le lachez pas! Tonnerre de tonnerres!") However Sipiágin did not conduct him into the cabinet, but requested him with the same polite firmness to remain in the drawing-room till he was called. Páklin hoped there would now be a chance, but at the door appeared a stalwart gendarme who had been called by Kalloméitsef . . . so he remained.

"I suppose you can guess what has brought me Vóldemar?" began Sipiágin.

"No, my dear fellow, I cannot," answered the amiable Epicurean, showing his white teeth half hidden by his silky moustache, while his rosy cheeks expanded into a welcoming smile.

"Why, Markélof . . ."

"Who is Markélof?" repeated the governor, continuing to smile. Firstly he did not clearly remember that the man who had been arrested the day before was called Markélof; secondly, he had totally forgotten that Sipiágin's wife had a brother of that name. "But why are you standing, Borís? sit down won't you have some tea?"

But Sipiágin was thinking of other things than tea.

When he had explained what the matter was, and why he and Kalloméitsef had come, the governor gave an exclamation of sorrow, struck his forehead with his hand, and an expression as of pain passed over his face.

"Of course, of course!" he repeated, "what a misfortune! He is still under guard here, for the moment; you know we never keep that class of offenders more than one night, but the chief of the secret police was not in town, so your brother-in-law had to remain But to-morrow he will be sent off. Good Heavens, how unfortunate! How unhappy your wife must be! But what can I do for you?"

"I should like to see him here before you, if the law permit."

"My dear friend, of course! The law was not written for such as you. I do so sympathize with you. C'est affreux, tu sais!"

He gave an understood signal on his bell, and an aide-de-camp appeared.

"My dear baron, I beg of you, arrange this for me . . ." He told him what to do, and the baron disappeared. "Just imagine, mon cher ami; the peasants almost killed him. His hands behind his back, into a cart and off! And as for him, he is not angry with them, not even annoyed, not a bit! His calmness really astonished me. But you shall see for yourself. C'est un fanatique tranquille."

"Ce sont les pires," said Kalloméitsef, sententiously.

The governor looked at him from under his eyebrows.

"By the way I have to talk to you, Semeón Petróvitch."

"What about?"

"Something unpleasant."

"What is it?"

"Why, that peasant who owed you money, the one who came to complain to me"

"What about him?"

"He has hanged himself."

"When?"

"When doesn't matter, but it is an unpleasant business."

Kalloméitsef shrugged his shoulders and walked to the window, swinging his body carelessly to and fro. At that moment the aide-de-camp entered with Markélof.

The governor had told the truth about him; he was unnaturally calm. Even his usual sullenness had left his face, and had been replaced by an expression of fatigued indifference. His face remained unchanged when he saw his brother-in-law, and only in the glance which he cast at the German aide-de-camp who had escorted him in could be seen a trace of his hatred for that class of people. His coat was torn in two places, and hurriedly sewn up with coarse thread. On his forehead, over his eyes, and on the bridge of his nose, were little scars with clots of blood still on them. He had not washed, but had combed his hair. Pulling his coat-sleeves far over his wrists, he stopped close to the door. His breathing was regular.

"Sergéi Mikháilovitch!" began Sipiágin, in an agitated voice, going up to within two paces of him and stretching out his right hand, so that it could touch him, or stop him if he made a movement forward. "Sergéi Mikháilovitch! I have not come here to express our amazement, our profound distress, for you can hardly doubt them! You wished to ruin yourself and you have done so! But I have desired to see you that I might tell you . . . might give you an opportunity of hearing the voice of common sense, of honour, of friendship! You may yet make your penalty lighter, and, trust me, I for my part will do all

that lies in my power. The respected chief of our province here before us will confirm what I say." Here Sipiágin raised his voice. "Sincere repentance of your errors, and a full confession, concealing nothing, which will be forwarded to the proper authorities"

"Your Excellency," said Markélof all at once, turning to the governor—and the sound of his voice was calm, if a little hoarse—"I thought it was you who wanted to see me, and perhaps to examine me again; but if you have only sent for me at Mr. Sipiágin's request, please order me to be removed; we cannot understand one another; all that he says is so much Greek to me."

"Greek!" broke in Kalloméitsef in a shrill, sharp tone. "Is it Greek to stir up the peasantry? Is it Greek, eh, is it Greek?"

"Is that gentleman an official of the secret police, your Excellency? He is so zealous!" asked Markélof, and a slight smile of pleasure passed over his pale lips.

Kalloméitsef cried out and stamped his foot. . . . but the governor stopped him.

"It serves you right, Semeón Petróvitch. Why do you interfere in matters which do not concern you?"

"Which do not concern me? I should have thought they concerned us all, us nobles. . . ."

Markélof turned his eyes coldly and slowly on Kalloméitsef, as if looking at him for the last time, then turned towards Sipiágin. "And if you wish me to explain my ideas to you, here they are. I acknowledge that the peasants had a right to arrest me and give me up if they did not like what I said to them. That was for them to decide. I went to them; they did not come to me. And if the government sends me to Siberia I shall not complain, though I do not consider myself guilty. It defends itself: well, that is its business. Is that sufficient for you?"

Sipiágin raised his hands to heaven.

"Sufficient! What a word! That is not the question, it is not for us to judge of the conduct of the government. What I wish to know is, do you feel, Sergéi" (Sipiágin was endeavouring to appeal to his feelings), "the unreasonableness, the madness, of your undertaking; will you give some proof of your repentance, may I answer for you, answer for you at least to a certain extent, Sergéi?"

Markélof lowered his thick eyebrows.

"I have said—and I do not choose to repeat what I have said."

"But the repentance, where is the repentance?"

Markélof all at once lost all restraint.

"Oh, do leave me at peace with your repentance. Do you want to pry into my conscience? At least you might leave that to me!"

Sipiágin shrugged his shoulders.

"You were always like that; you never would listen to the voice of reason. I can give you the opportunity of saving yourself honourably and quietly. . . ."

"Honourably and quietly!" repeated Markélof, in a morose voice. "I know those words! They are always used to persuade a man to commit some meanness. That is what they signify!"

"We pity you," continued Sipiágin, still endeavouring to bring Markélof to reason, "and you hate us."

"Pity us! You send us to Siberia, to penal servitude,—that is your pity. Oh, leave me alone, for God's sake!"

And Markélof bowed down his head.

Quiet as was his manner externally, at heart he was greatly disturbed. What tortured and annoyed him most of all was that the man who had betrayed him was—Iereméi of Galapliók! That same Iereméi in whom he had had such blind confidence! That

Mendeléi the wind-bag had not followed him did not really astonish him. For Mendeléi was drunk and therefore a coward. But Iereméi! For Markélof, Iereméi had been as it were the incarnation of the Russian people. . . . and it was he who had betrayed him! Then was all for which he had worked a sham and nothing more? Did Kisliakóf really lie and boast, were Vasíli Nikoláévitch's orders nonsense, and all those essays, books, writings of socialists and advanced thinkers, every letter of which had seemed to him so certain and so infallible—were they all a bubble? Impossible! And that splendid comparison, the mature abscess awaiting the stroke of the lancet, was that too a mere phrase? "No, no!" he whispered to himself, and a faint tinge of brick-red suffused his tanned cheeks; "No; all that is right: it is I who am wrong, I who have failed; I did not say the right thing, did not know how to set to work! I ought simply to have commanded, and if any one had hindered me, or resisted, to have put a ball through his head, without further argument! The man who is not with us has no right to live. . . . Are not spies killed like dogs, worse than dogs?"

And Markélof remembered every detail of his capture. First a silence in the crowd, glances interchanged, cries among those furthest off; then a peasant advancing to him on one side, as if to salute him. Then that sudden tumult, as he felt himself thrown to the ground, "My lads, my lads, what are you doing?" and in answer, "Bring a belt, bring a belt, tie his hands!" The cracking of his joints. . . . and his unavailing fury. . . . and the filthy dust in his mouth and nostrils. . . . "Into a cart with him, quick!" Then a coarse laugh. . . . Pheugh!

"I went the wrong way to work!"

This was what was torturing him; the fact that he had fallen under the wheel was merely his own per-

sonal misfortune; it did not concern the cause; it might have been borne, . . . but Iereméi!

While Markélof stood with his head bowed forward, Sipiágin had taken the governor to one side and was talking to him in a low tone, making slight gestures and performing a little shake with two fingers on his own forehead, as much as to say that the poor fellow was not quite right there; in a word he was doing his best to excite, if not sympathy, at least pity for this madman. The governor shrugged his shoulders, now raised his eyes to the ceiling, now closed them, expressed regret at his own powerlessness, but still gave a half-promise. . . . "Tous les égards, certainement, tous les égards," could be heard the pleasant lisp through the perfumed moustache. . . . "But you know, the law!"

"Of course, the law!" answered Sipiágin with a gesture of grave submission.

While they were talking in the corner, Kalloméitsetf seemed very restless; he walked to and fro, emitting various sounds and other signs of impatience. At length he went up to Sipiágin, and said, hurriedly,—

"Vous oubliez l'autre!"

"Ah, yes, by the way," said Sipiágin, aloud. "Merci de me l'avoir rappelé. I must bring the following fact to the notice of your Excellency," he turned to the governor (he used this title in addressing his friend Vóldemar, in order not to impair the prestige of authority before a rebel). "I have good grounds for supposing that the mad attempt of my *beau-frère* has certain ramifications, and that one of these branches—that is, one of the persons I suspect—is now living not far distant from this town. There is some one in your drawing-room," he continued in a lower voice; "order him to be shown in. I brought him with me."

The governor looked at Sipiágin, and thought, with a certain awe, "What a man it is!" and gave the

order. A moment after the servant of God,* SÍla Páklin, was standing before his eyes.

Páklin began by bowing low to the governor, but, catching sight of Markélof, broke off in the middle, and remained as he was, bent forward, twisting his hat from one hand to the other. Markélof threw an indifferent glance at him, but did not seem to recognize him, for he relapsed into thought.

"Is that—the—branch?" asked the governor, pointing at Páklin with his large white finger, adorned with a turquoise.

"Oh, no!" answered Sipiágin, with a half-laugh. "Yet . . ." he added, after a moment's thought. "Your Excellency," he again began, "you have before you a certain Mr. Páklin. He lives in Petersburg, I believe, and is an intimate friend of a certain person who was formerly a tutor in my house, and who left it, carrying off at the same time, I blush to say, a young lady, my relative."

"Ah, oui, oui!" murmured the governor, nodding his head. "I heard something about it. The countess told me . . ."

Sipiágin raised his voice.

"This person is a certain Mr. Nejdánof, whom I strongly suspect of holding subversive opinions and theories. . . ."

"Un rouge à tous crins," broke in Kalloméitsef.

"Subversive opinions and theories," continued Sipiágin, more distinctly than before, "and who, of course, is mixed up in all this propaganda. He is living . . . hiding, as Mr. Páklin told me, in the factory of the merchant Faléief."

At the words, "As Mr. Páklin told me," Markélof again looked at Páklin, and a languid, indifferent sneer passed over his face.

An expression frequently used in the Orthodox Church.

"Stop, stop, your Excellency," called out Páklin "and you too, Mr. Sipiágin. I never . . . never . . ."

"You say the merchant Faléief?" asked the governor, turning to Sipiágin, taking no notice of Páklin except to wave his finger in his direction, meaning, "Gently, my dear sir, gently!" "But what has possessed them all, our worthy long-beards? One was arrested yesterday about this same business. You have heard his name, perhaps—Goloushkin, a rich fellow. But he is not the stuff for a revolutionist; he does nothing but crawl on his knees before us."

"Faléief has nothing to do with this," continued Sipiágin, in his clear voice. "I do not know his opinions; I am only speaking of his factory, where, according to Mr. Páklin, Mr. Nejdánof is living at the present moment."

"I never said that!" howled Páklin again; "it was you who said it!"

"Permit me, Mr. Páklin," went on Sipiágin, with the same merciless distinctness. "I respect the feeling of friendship which inspires your denial." ("What a Guizot!" thought the governor.) "But I will be bold enough to set myself up as an example to you. Do you imagine that the feeling of relationship is not as strong in me as that of friendship in you? But there is another feeling, my dear sir, which is still stronger, and which ought to rule all our actions and deeds: the feeling of duty!"

"Le sentiment du devoir!" exclaimed Kalloméitsef.

Markélof looked round at all the speakers.

"Your Excellency," he said, "I repeat my request; pray order me to be removed from out of hearing of all this clap-trap."

At this the governor rather lost patience.

"Mr. Markélof," he exclaimed, "in your position I should advise you a little more restraint in your language, and a little more respect for your superiors,

especially when they utter such patriotic sentiments as you have just heard from the lips of your brother-in-law ! I shall consider it a pleasure, my dear Borís,” he added, turning to Sipiágin, “to bring your noble conduct to the notice of the minister. But with whom is Mr. Nejdánof living at this factory ?”

Sipiágin frowned.

“With the engineer-in-chief—a certain Mr. Solómin, as Mr. Páklin also told me.”

Sipiágin seemed to find a special pleasure in tormenting the wretched Páklin. He was revenging himself for the cigar the latter had smoked in the carriage, and for the polite familiarity of his own behaviour to him, and even for the little playfulness he had expended upon him.

“And this Solómin,” interrupted Kalloméitsef, “is an undoubted radical and republican ; and it would not be amiss for your Excellency to turn your attention on him as well.”

“You know these gentlemen . . . Solómin, and what’s his name . . . Nejdánof ?” asked the governor of Markélof, in rather a nasal and official tone.

Markélof expanded his nostrils with malignant pleasure.

“And you, your Excellency, do you know Confucius and Livy ?”

The governor turned away.

“Il n’y a pas moyen de causer avec cet homme,” he said, with a shrug of his shoulders. “Baron, please come here.”

The aide-de-camp sprang to his side, while Páklin, making the best of his opportunity, limped and stumbled up to Sipiágin.

“What are you doing ?” he whispered. “Why are you ruining your relative ? For she is there, you know, with Nejdánof !”

“I am ruining no one, my dear sir,” said Sipiágin,

aloud; "I am obeying the dictates of my conscience. . . ."

"And of your wife, my sister, under whose petticoat you are," said Markélof, also aloud.

Sipiágin took not the smallest notice. . . . It was so far below him!

"Listen," Páklin continued, still in a whisper; his whole person was quivering with emotion, with fear perhaps; his eyes were sparkling with anger, and tears were rising in his throat—tears of pity for them and of vexation with himself. "Listen! I told you she was married; it is untrue. I told you a lie. But they are to be married, and if you prevent it by sending the police, there will be a stain on your conscience which nothing will ever wash off, while you . . ."

"The information you have given me," interrupted Sipiágin, still louder, "if it be true, which I have the right to doubt, can only cause me to expedite the measures which I consider it necessary to take; while as for the purity of my conscience, sir, I must ask you not to concern yourself so much about it."

"It is polished, my friend, that conscience of yours," broke in Markélof; "the real Petersburg varnish, warranted to stand damp! As for you, Mr. Páklin, whisper—whisper as long as you like; you will not whisper yourself out of this mess, don't think it!"

The governor thought it time to put an end to this scene.

"I think," he began, "that you, gentlemen, have said all you wish to say, so, my dear baron, remove Mr. Markélof. N'est-ce pas, Borís? you want nothing more. . . ."

Sipiágin waved his hands away from him.

"I have said all I could!"

"Exactly so; my dear baron. . . ."

The aide-de-camp approached Markélof, clicked his

heels together, and made a horizontal movement of his hand, as much as to say, "If you please!" Márkélóf turned and went out. Páklín mentally shook his hand; only mentally, true, but with deep sympathy and pity.

"And we will send our fellows to the factory," said the governor. "Only, Borís, I fancy that gentleman" (he indicated Páklín with his chin) "told you something about your relation; about her being there too. . . . So what are we to do? . . ."

"Of course you cannot arrest her," remarked Sipiágín, thoughtfully; "perhaps she will repent and return home. If you will allow me I will write her a note."

"Certainly, certainly; all we can do you may be sure. . . . *Nous coffrerons le quidam, mais nous sommes galants avec les dames . . . et avec celle-là donc!*"

"But are you going to do nothing about that Solómin?" exclaimed Kalloméitsef, piteously. He had been listening attentively the whole time, and trying to catch what the governor and Sipiágín were saying aside. "I am positive he is the leader! I have such a scent for them!"

"Pas trop de zèle, my dear Semeón Petróvitch," said the governor, showing his teeth. "You remember Talleyrand? If he is implicated he will not escape us. You had better think about your . . . k k k . . . k k!" and the governor made a sign as of a rope round his neck. "By the way," he once more turned to Sipiágín, "*et ce gaillard-là*" (he again pointed at Páklín with his chin) "*qu'en ferons nous? He is not very terrible to look at!*"

"Let him go," said Sipiágín in a low voice, and added in German, "*Lass' den Lumpen laufen!*"

He somehow imagined he was quoting Goethe's 'Goetz von Berlichingen.'

"You can go, my dear sir," said the governor out loud. "We have no further need of you. I have the honour of wishing you good-day."

Páklin made a general bow and went out into the street, crushed and annihilated. This disdain had finished him.

"Can it be?" he thought, with inexpressible despair, "am I a coward, an informer? No, no; I am an honest man, and have not lost all manliness!"

But what is this well-known figure on the steps of the governor's residence, looking at him with melancholy eyes filled with reproach? Yes, it is Markélof's old servant. He has followed his master into town, and will not leave his prison-door. Only why does he look at Páklin like that? It is not Páklin who has betrayed Markélof.

"Why did I thrust myself in where I had no business to be?" he went on, in the same despairing strain of thought. "Why couldn't I keep quiet in my corner? And now people will be saying, and perhaps writing, 'A certain Mr. Páklin told everything, betrayed them, betrayed his friends to the enemy!'" Then he remembered the look Markélof had given him, and his last words, "You will never whisper yourself out of this mess, don't think it!" and now these melancholy, heart-broken eyes of the old man. And, as it is said in the Scriptures, "He wept bitterly" as he made his way back to the oasis, to Fómoushka and Fímoushka, to Snandúlia. . . .

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WHEN Mariáanna left her room on the morning that all this was happening, she saw Nejdánof sitting dressed on the sofa. He was resting his head on one hand, while the other lay feeble and motionless on his knees. She went up to him.

"Good day, Alexéi . . . why, you have not undressed, you have not been to bed! How pale you are!"

He slowly raised his heavy eyelids.

"I have not undressed, and I have not been to bed."

"Are you not well, or is it still the effects of yesterday?"

Nejdánof shook his head.

"I have not slept since Solómin went into your room."

"When?"

"Yesterday evening."

"Why, Alexéi, you are jealous! That is something new. And what a time you have chosen to be jealous! He only stopped in my room a quarter of an hour, and we talked of his cousin, the priest, and of how to arrange our marriage."

"I know he only stopped a quarter of an hour; I

saw him come out. And I am not jealous, no ! stil I could not sleep after that."

"Why not ?"

Nejdánof remained silent for a moment.

"I was thinking thinking thinking !"

"Of what ?"

"Of you of him and of myself."

"And to what results did your thoughts lead you ?"

"Shall I tell you, Mariánna ?"

"Tell me."

"I thought that I was in the way ; in your way in his and in my own."

"In my way, and in Solómin's ! I understand what you mean by that, though you are so certain that you are not jealous. But in your own way ?"

"Mariánna, there are two men within me, and one of them gives the other no peace. So I think that it would be better for both of them to cease living."

"Oh, Alexéi, do not go on in that strain, please ! Why torture yourself and me ? We ought to be consulting now what measures to take For we can hardly hope to be left undisturbed by the police."

Nejdánof took her hand caressingly.

"Sit down by me, Mariánna, and let us have a chat, like friends, while there is time yet. Give me your hand. I think it would not be amiss for us to have an explanation, although people do say that explanations always lead to greater confusion. But you are good and sensible ; you will understand me ; and what I do not say you will fill up for yourself. Sit down."

Nejdánof's voice was very low and quiet, and in his eyes, which were gazing fixedly on Mariánna, was a strange look of friendly tenderness and entreaty.

She at once and willingly sat down by his side and took his hand.

“Thanks, my dear one, and now listen. I will not keep you long, for I have been thinking during the night of what I should say to you. Listen. Do not imagine that what happened yesterday has distressed me over much. I was probably very ridiculous and even a trifle disgusting; but I know you did not think anything low or bad of me . . . you know me. I said that it did not distress me much; that is not true; that is nonsense: I am distressed, not because I was brought home drunk, but because it has finally proved to me my own impotence. Not only that I cannot drink as Russians drink, but in everything—in everything! Mariáanna, I am bound to tell you that I no longer believe in that cause which first united us, for which we left that house together; to tell the truth, I was cooling towards it even then, but the fire which was in you heated me and urged me on; I do not believe in it, I do not believe in it!”

He covered his eyes with the hand which was at liberty, and paused for a moment. Mariáanna looked down and did not say a word. She felt that he was telling her nothing she did not already know.

“I used to think,” continued Nejdánof, removing his hand from his eyes, but without looking at Mariáanna, “that I believed in the cause itself, but only distrusted myself, my own strength, my own aptitudes. My abilities, I thought, were not on a par with my convictions. But I suppose the two things cannot be separated, and why deceive oneself any longer? No, it is the cause I do not believe in—the actual cause. You do, do you not, Mariáanna?”

Mariáanna drew herself up and raised her head.

“Yes, Alexéi, I do. I believe in it with all my strength, and will devote my life to the cause, to my last breath!”

Nejdánof turned round and contemplated her with a touched yet envying look.

“Yes, yes ; I expected that answer. You see, the is nothing for us to do together ; you yourself have snapped the tie between us with one blow.”

Mariánna did not answer.

“Look at Solómin,” continued Nejdánof ; “he does not believe”

“What ?”

“No, he does not believe but he does not need to believe ; he moves calmly onwards. A man who is going towards a town does not ask himself, ‘But does this town really exist ?’ He goes on and on. So does Solómin, and that is all that is wanted. While I cannot go forward, I will not go back and to stop where I am is misery. Whom could I have the boldness to ask to be my companion ? You know the proverb, ‘One takes one end of the pole, the other the other, and things go capitally !’ But : one cannot carry his share, what is to become of the other ?”

“But, Alexéi,” said Mariánna, hesitatingly. “I think you are exaggerating. We love each other.”

Nejdánof gave a deep sigh.

“Mariánna I incline myself respectfully before you and you pity me, and each of us is sure of the honesty of the other. That is the truth ; but there is no love between us !”

“But, Alexéi, what are you saying ? We shall be pursued to-day, almost immediately. Surely we must go away together, not leave each other.”

“Yes, and go to Zósima, the priest, to be married as Solómin proposes. I know very well that in your eyes this marriage is nothing more than a passport, a means of avoiding difficulties with the police ; still it does bind us to a certain extent to living together, or, rather, side by side or if it does not bind us, it at least presupposes a wish to live together.”

“What do you mean, Alexéi? Do you intend to remain here?”

“Yes!” was on the tip of Nejdánof’s tongue; but he restrained himself, and said,—

“No no.”

“Then are you not going from here to the same place as I am?”

Nejdánof grasped her hand, which was still lying in his.

“To leave you without a protector, without a defender, would be a crime; and, however weak I may be, I have not come to that yet. You will not want for a defender, do not doubt it.”

Mariánna stooped over him, and, approaching her face to his, endeavoured to look through his eyes into his inmost soul.

“What is it, Alexéi? What have you on your mind? Tell me! You distress me—your words are so mysterious, so strange . . . and your face, too! I have never seen such a look on it before.”

Nejdánof pushed her back gently, and gently kissed her hand. This time she did not resist, nor laugh, but continued to look at him anxiously and timidly.

“Do not alarm yourself, please. There is nothing strange in it. My misery lies in this. They say that the peasants beat Markélof; they struck him with their fists—bruised his bones. Me they did not beat; on the contrary, they drank with me—drank my health but they bruised my soul more than Markélof’s bones. I was torn out of joint, tried to put myself in again, and dislocated myself worse than before. That is what you notice on my face.”

“Alexéi,” said Mariánna, slowly, “it would be a sin on your part not to be frank with me.”

He clenched his fists.

“Mariánna, my whole being is before you, as if it were on the palm of my hand; and whatever I do, I tell you beforehand, there will be nothing for you to be astonished at, nothing!”

Mariánna thought of asking for an explanation of these words, but she did not, and at that moment Solómin entered the room.

His movements were quicker and more abrupt than usual. His eyes were half closed, his thick lips tightly compressed; his whole face seemed sharper-featured, and had taken a hard, firm, rather rough expression.

“My friends,” he began, “I have come to tell you that there is no time to be lost. Collect your things, for we must be going. In an hour we must be ready, and you must go and be married. There is no news of Páklin. They kept his conveyance some time at Arjánoc, and then sent it back. Of course he will not betray you, but who knows, he may chatter too much. Besides which the horses may be recognized. My cousin has had notice given him. Pável will go with you and act as witness.”

“And you,” asked Nejdánof, “shall you not come with us? I see you are ready for travelling,” he added, looking at the high boots which Solómin had on.

“That is nothing; it is muddy out of doors.”

“But they may make you suffer for us?”

“I do not think so; in any case, that is my business. So, in an hour. Mariánna, Tatiána wishes to see you. She has something there . . .”

“Yes; I myself wish to speak to her.”

Mariánna went towards the door.

On Nejdánof’s face appeared a strange look—a look of dread, of anguish. . . .

“Mariánna, are you going?” he said, in a voice which suddenly died away.

She stopped.

"I shall be back in half an hour. It will not take me long to pack."

"Yes; but come here a moment. . . ."

"Certainly; but why?"

"I want to look at you once more." He looked long and fixedly at her. "Good-bye, good-bye, Mariánna!"

She stared at him in astonishment.

"What . . . what am I saying? I was thinking of something else. You are coming back in half an hour?"

"Of course I am."

"Yes, yes; of course. Excuse me. My brains are wool-gathering from want of sleep. I too will . . . settle matters directly."

Mariánna left the room, and Solómin was following her, when Nejdánof stopped him.

"Solómin!"

"What?"

"Give me your hand. I must thank you for your hospitality."

Solómin smiled.

"What an idea!" he said, but gave him his hand.

"And another thing!" continued Nejdánof; "if anything happens to me, I can rely on you not to abandon Mariánna?"

"Your future wife?"

"Yes—Mariánna.

"Firstly, nothing is going to happen to you; secondly, you may reassure yourself—Mariánna is as dear to me as she is to you."

"Yes, I know it. . . . I know it! Well, all right; and thanks. So, in an hour?"

"In an hour."

"I shall be ready. Good-bye."

Solómin went out and overtook Mariánna on the staircase. He had thought of saying something to her about Nejdánof, but did not. Mariánna, too, understood that Solómin had something to say, and that it was about Nejdánof, and that he did not like to say it. So she too was silent.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SCARCELY had Solómin disappeared, when Nejdánof sprang up from the sofa, took a couple of turns up and down, then stood for a moment in the centre of the room like a statue; then again roused himself, hurriedly threw off his "masquerade" costume, thrust it into a corner with his foot, and put on the clothes he had formerly worn. Then he went up to the three-legged table, and took out of the drawer two sealed envelopes and a small object. This he put into his pocket, leaving the letters on the table. Then he stooped down before the stove and opened it. Inside it was a heap of ashes, all that remained of Nejdánof's papers, of his book of poetry. He had burnt them all during the night. But also within the stove, leaning against one side, was the portrait of Mariánna, which Markélof had given him. This he had apparently not had the courage to burn; he took it out tenderly and laid it on the table by the side of the letters.

Then he caught up his cap with a reckless gesture, and made for the door . . . but he stopped, came back, and went into Mariánna's room. There he stood a moment, looked round, and, going up to her little bed, bent over it, and, with one silent sob, kissed not

the pillow, but the foot of the bed. Then he sprang up, pulled his cap over his forehead, and rushed out.

He met no one either in the passage or on the stair case or down below, and slipped out into the garden. It was a dull day, the clouds were low, and a damp breeze was stirring the tops of the plants and the foliage of the trees. The noise of the factory was less deafening than was usual at that hour of the day. From the yard came a smell of charcoal, tar, and tallow.

He looked round sharply and suspiciously, and walked directly up to that same old apple-tree which had attracted his attention the day of his arrival, the first time he had looked out of the window of their lodging. The trunk of this tree was overgrown with lichen; its bare, knotty boughs, with here and there a greenish-red leaf hanging to them, rose upwards, bent like withered arms in prayer.

Nejdánof took his stand with firmness on the dark soil, close to the root of the tree; then drew from his pocket the small object which had lain in the table-drawer. He next looked attentively at the windows of the house. "If any one were to see me now," he thought, "I might put it off. . . ." But no human face was visible anywhere. . . . it seemed as if everything was dead, had turned away from him, departed for ever, left him to his fate. Alone the noise and smell of the factory came to him, while tiny little needle-points of cold rain began to fall on him from above.

Nejdánof looked up through the gnarled boughs of the tree under which he was standing, at the lowering, grey, damp, indifferent sky; yawned, shivered, and thought, "After all, there was nothing else to be done; I couldn't go back to Petersburg—to prison"; then threw off his cap. A strong shudder of nervous emotion, almost unbearable, yet not without sweetness, ran through his whole body as he placed the

muzzle of the revolver to his breast, and pulled the trigger. . . .

As he did it, something struck him, not very hard, it seemed . . . but he found himself on his back, trying to understand what had happened, and how it was he had that moment seen Tatiána. He tried to call her, to say, "Oh, it is all wrong!" but his voice failed him, and over his face, his forehead, before his eyes, through his brain, there swept an opaque greenish whirlwind, and he felt for ever crushed to earth by some unbearable weight.

He had really seen Tatiána. At the moment he had pulled the trigger, she had approached one of the windows, and had seen him under the tree. Before she had time to think, "What is he doing, bare-headed, under the apple-tree, in weather like this?" she saw him fall backwards like a sheaf of corn. She did not hear the report, for the noise was very slight, but guessed that something wrong had happened, and rushed headlong down into the garden. She flew up to him.

"Alexéi Dmítritch, what is it?"

But darkness had already come over his eyes. Tatiána bent over him, saw blood. . . .

"Pável!" she shrieked, in a voice quite strange to her,— "Pável!"

A few moments after, Mariánna, Solómin, Pável, and two other workmen were in the garden. They lifted Nejdánof, carried him in, and laid him on the same sofa on which he had passed his last night.

He lay on his back, with his eyes fixed and half closed, his face blueish in colour, drawing long uneven breaths with difficulty, and with occasional choking sobs. Life had not yet fled. Mariánna and Solómin stood on either side of the sofa, almost as pale as Nejdánof himself. They were both crushed, broken down almost annihilated, by the blow, especially

·Mariánna, but they were not surprised. "How was it we did not foresee this?" they both thought; and, at the same time, it seemed as if they had foreseen it. When he said to Mariánna, "Whatever I do, I tell you beforehand, do not be astonished!" and again when he had spoken of the two men within him who could not live together, had no dim apprehension then stirred within her? Why had she not then thought over those words and examined her own apprehensions? Why does she not dare glance at Solómin, as if he were her accomplice; as if his conscience must be smiting him too now? Why does she feel not only such utter, maddening pity for Nejdánof, but terror, shame, and remorse? Perhaps it had only depended upon her to save him! Why do they not dare to utter a word, hardly to breathe? They can only wait . . . and wait for what? My God!

Solómin had sent for a doctor, although, of course, there was not the smallest hope. Tatiána had placed a large sponge with cold water on the little wound, almost bloodless, but nearly black, and was wetting his forehead with vinegar and water. All at once Nejdánof ceased sobbing, and stirred.

"He is coming to himself," whispered Solómin.

Mariánna dropped on her knees by the sofa; Nejdánof turned his eyes on her Up to that time they had been fixed like those of a dying man.

"Still alive!" he murmured, almost inaudibly. "Even in this I have failed still hindering you."

"Aliósha!" groaned Mariánna.

"Directly. . . . Do you remember, Mariánna, in my poem, 'Surround me with flowers'? Where are the flowers? But, at least, you are here. In my letter"

A shiver passed over him.

"There she is give one another your hands before me quick give"

Solómin took Mariánna's hand. Her head was resting, face downwards, on the sofa, close to the wound.

Solómin was standing, upright and grave, black as night.

"So well so"

The sobs recommenced, but now strangely different. His chest stood out, his sides fell inwards. He was evidently trying to lay his hand on theirs, but his were already dead.

"He is dying!" whispered Tatiána, who was standing by the door, and began to cross herself.

The sobs grew sharper and rarer. He was seeking Mariánna with his eyes, but a terrible white mist had spread over them from within

"Well" was his last word.

He was dead, and the hands of Solómin and Mariánna still lay clasped on his breast.

These were the two letters he had left behind. One was addressed to Sflin, and contained but a few lines.

"Good-bye, my friend, good-bye. When you receive this, I shall no longer be alive. Do not ask why, or how, or pity me—it is better so. Take our immortal Poushkin, and read the description of the death of Lénski in 'Evgéni Onégin.' You remember. 'The windows are splashed with lime, the mistress is out' That is all. I have nothing to tell you for I should have too much to say, and my time is short. But I would not depart without warning you, or you would have thought me living, and I should have sinned against our friendship. Good-bye. Live long. Your friend,

"A. N."

The other letter was rather longer. It was

addressed to Solómin and Mariánna, and ran a follows:—

“My Children!”

(After these words came a break; something had been crossed out, or rather blotted, as if tears had fallen there.)

“You may think it strange for me to call you thus I am almost a child myself, and you, Solómin, are of course older than I. But I am about to die, and standing at the end of my life, I look on myself as an old man. I am much to blame before you both and especially before you, Mariánna, for causing you so much grief (I know you will be grieved, Mariánna, and so much anxiety. But what could I do? I found no other escape. I could not simplify myself; the only thing that remained was to strike myself out altogether. Yes, Mariánna, I was a burden on myself and on you. You have a noble mind, and would have rejoiced in that burden, or in a new sacrifice... but I had no right to impose that sacrifice on you you have a greater and worthier work to do. My children, let me as it were put out a hand from my tomb to unite you. You will be happy together. You Mariánna will now give all your love to Solómin, and as for him, he loved you as soon as he saw you at Sipiágin's. This was no secret for me, though we fled together a few days later. Oh, that morning! How glorious and fresh and young it was! It seems to me now like an expression, a symbol of your united lives—yours and his; I was only in his place by accident. But I must finish. I do not wish to seek for sympathy. I only wish to justify myself. To-morrow you will have some very sad moments... But what is to be done? Is there any other way out of it? Good-bye, Mariánna, my dear, honest girl! Good-bye, Solómin, I entrust her to you! Live happily; do good to others; and do you, Mariánna

only remember me when you are happy. Think of me as a man who was also good and honest, but who did better by dying than he would have done by living. Whether my love for you was real love, I know not, my dear friend ; but this know, that I have never felt any stronger feeling, and that death would be even more terrible if I did not carry that feeling with me to my grave.

“ Mariánna, if you ever happen to meet a girl, by name Mashúrina—Solómin knows her, and, by the way, I think you too have seen her—tell her that I remembered her kindly not long before my death . . . she will understand.

“ But I must tear myself away. I was looking out of window this moment, and in the midst of the swiftly drifting cloud stood one lovely star. Fast though they might drift, they could not hide it. That star reminded me of you, Mariánna ! At this instant you are sleeping in the next room, and suspect nothing . . . I went up to your door, listened, and seemed to hear your pure calm breathing. Good-bye, good-bye, my children, my friends !

“ Yours, A.

“ Dear, dear ! How is it that in my last letter I have said nothing about our mighty cause ! I suppose because before death there is no object in lying. Forgive me this, Mariánna . . . the lie was in me, and not in the cause in which you believe !

“ Another thing : you will perhaps think, Mariánna, that I was afraid of the prison, into which I should certainly have fallen, and that this was my way of escaping it ? No ; the prison is nothing much ; but to go to prison for a cause in which one does not believe would never do. So I am making away with myself, but it is not from fear of prison.

“ Good-bye, Mariánna, my pure, dear girl ! ”

Mariánna and Solómin read this letter, one after the other. Then she put the portrait and both the letters into her pocket—but did not offer to move.

Solómin said, "All is ready, Mariánna; let us go. We must fulfil his wishes."

Mariánna went up to Nejdánof, touched the cold forehead with her lips, and turning to Solómin said "Come."

He took her hand and they went out.

A few hours later, when the police entered the factory, they found Nejdánof indeed, but found him a corpse. Tatiána had laid him out, crossed his hands, placed a white pillow under his head, even a bouquet of flowers on the table by him, and Pável, who had received all the necessary instructions, met the officials with the utmost politeness dashed with a little satire, so that they hardly knew whether to thank him or to arrest him. He gave them full details as to Nejdánof's suicide, accompanying them with Swiss cheese and Madeira; but professed the most absolute ignorance where Vasíli Fedótitch and the strange young lady might be; he confined himself to repeating that Vasíli Fedótitch was never away long because of the business; that if he were not back to-day he would be to-morrow, and then he would let them know in town, without losing a minute. Oh, he was an accurate man, they might trust him for that!

So the police departed as they had come, leaving a watch by the body, and saying that they would send the proper official to inspect it.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

TWO days after this event a peasant's cart, in which sat a man and a woman whom we well know, rolled into the courtyard of Zósima, the "accommodating" priest—and on the morrow of their arrival they were married. Soon afterwards they disappeared, and the good Zósima had no cause to repent of his kindly act. A letter reached the factory, addressed to Solómin's employer, to whom it was forwarded by Pável ; it contained a full and detailed account of the position of the business, which was extremely favourable, and a request for three months' leave. This letter was dated two days before Nejdánof's death, whence we may conclude that Solómin had even then had the intention of leaving with him and Mariánna, and of hiding for a time. The inquest which was held on Nejdánof produced no result. The body was buried, and Šipiágin made no further attempt to find Mariánna.

Nine months later Markélof was tried. Before the court he bore himself as he had done before the governor ; calmly, not without a certain dignity, and rather sadly. His usual abrupt, hard manner had grown gentler, not from weakness, but from another and a more noble feeling. He made no defence, nor did he show any signs of repentance ; he accused no

one and named no one ; his pale face, with its sunk eyes, expressed nothing but fortitude and resignation to his fate, and his brief but straightforward and truthful answers excited a feeling of sympathy even in his judges. The very peasants who had seized him, and were now bearing witness against him, shared this feeling, and spoke of him as a good, simple gentleman. But his offence was too clear ; punishment was inevitable, and he himself seemed to accept the punishment as his due. As to his confederates, who however, were but few in number, Mashúrina escaped ; Ostrodúmof was killed by a small tradesman to whom he had been preaching rebellion, and who had given him, as he said, an "awkward" blow ; Golóushki "considering his sincere repentance" (he had nearly gone mad with fright and horror), was only slightly punished ; Kisliakóf was kept a month under arrest then the authorities released him, and even raised no objection to his rushing once more all over Russia ; Nejdánof had escaped by suicide ; Solómin, though strongly suspected, was acquitted for want of evidence (he did not attempt to avoid trial, but appeared when summoned). About Mariánna not a word was said and Páklin, too, slipped through their fingers ; beside which they paid no particular attention to him.

A year and a half had passed, and the winter of 1870 had begun. In Petersburg the privy councillor and Kammerherr Sipiágin was preparing to play an important part ; his wife posed as the patroness of all the arts, gave evening concerts, and established soup kitchens for the poor ; and Kalloméitsef had come to be considered as one of the most promising officials of his department. In this same Petersburg one day

along one of the "lines"* of the Vasiliéfski Island, was hobbling and limping a little man in a shabby coat with a catskin collar. This was our friend Páklin. He had changed considerably in the interval; there were some white threads in the hair which peeped from under the edge of his fur cap. A rather stout and tall lady, wrapped tightly in a dark cloth cloak, approached him on the same side of the road. Páklin looked at her dreamily, and was passing by, when he suddenly stopped and considered a moment, made a rapid gesture, turned quickly round, and, running after her, looked up at her face.

"Mashúrina," he said, in a low tone.

The lady stared at him majestically, and went on without a word.

"My dear Mashúrina, I know you," continued Páklin, limping along by her side, "please do not be afraid. I shall not betray you—and I really am *too* glad to have met you. I am Páklin, Síla Páklin you know, a friend of Nejdánof's. Come into my rooms . . . I live a few steps from here. Please do."

"Io sono Contessa Rocca di Santo Fiume!" answered the lady, in a low voice, but with a wonderfully pure Russian accent.

"The contessa! What sort of a contessa? Come in and have a chat."

"But where do you live?" suddenly inquired the Italian countess in Russian. "I can't be wasting my time."

"Here, in this same 'line'; that is my house, that grey three-storied one. How kind of you not to try and conceal yourself from me! Take my arm, come along. Have you been long in Petersburg? And how do you come to be a countess? Have you married some Italian conte?"

* The streets of this part of Petersburg are only known their numbers, and are called lines.

Mashúrína had married no conte whatever ; she had been given a passport made out in the name of certain Countess Rocca di Santo Fiume who had died shortly before, and armed with that she had quietly set off for Russia, although she did not know a word of Italian, and her features were unmistakably Russian.

Páklin brought her to his modest lodging. His deformed sister, with whom he lived, came out to meet them from behind the partition which separates the tiny kitchen from the equally tiny entrance.

“Snápotchka,”* he said, “I have brought you a great friend ; give us some tea directly.”

Mashúrína, who would not have gone with Páklin had he not mentioned Nejdánof's name, took off her hat, passed her almost masculine hand through her hair, which was as usual cut short, then bowed, and sat down without speaking. She had not changed she even had on the same dress as when we first saw her, but in her eyes could be seen a kind of fixed melancholy, which gave an almost touching expression to her usually stern face.

Snandúlia went to fetch the tea-urn, while Páklin sat down by Mashúrína ; he tapped her gently on the knee and cast down his eyes ; then tried to speak but had to clear his throat ; his voice failed him and tears came into his eyes. Mashúrína sat upright and motionless, without leaning against the back of her chair, and looking sternly in an opposite direction.

“Yes, yes,” began Páklin, “we have seen strange things ! As I look at you I remember many things and people ; dead men and living ! My love-birds are dead ; but I do not think you knew them,—and both on the same day, as I foretold. And Nejdánof, poor Nejdánof ! You of course know. . . .”

“Yes, I know,” said Mashúrína, without looking at him.

* Diminutive of Snandúlia.

“And you know about Ostrodúmof too?”

Mashúrina only nodded. She wished him to continue speaking about Nejdánof, but did not care to ask him. But he understood.

“I heard that he spoke of you in his last letter. Was it true?”

Mashúrina did not answer for a moment. “Yes, he did,” she at length said.

“What an admirable man he was! But he got into the wrong groove! He was as fit to be a revolutionary leader as I am. Do you know what he really was? A romantic realist! Do you understand?”

Mashúrina threw a quick glance at Páklin. She had not understood him, and would not give herself the trouble to do so. It seemed to her strange and out of place for him to compare himself to Nejdánof; but she thought, “Let him brag: it does not matter now,” though he was not bragging in the least, but according to his views, rather disparaging himself.

“A man of the name of Sílin found me out here,” continued Páklin. “Nejdánof had also written to him before his death. So he, Sílin, wanted to know whether it would not be possible to find some of Nejdánof’s papers. But Aliósha’s belongings were all under seal: besides which there were no papers among them; he had burnt them all, including his verses. You perhaps do not know that he wrote verses? I am sorry they were lost; I am sure some of them were by no means bad. But all that disappeared with him; was swallowed by the same whirlpool, and vanished for ever. Nothing remains of him but his memory in the hearts of his friends, till they in their turn vanish!”

Páklin paused.

“But the Sipiágins now,” he began again—“do you remember, those condescending, important, objection-

able people,—are at the summit of power and glory!” Mashúrina had not the least idea who the Sipiágins were; but Páklin hated them both so much—especially him—that he could not refrain from the pleasure of “touching them up.” “People say their house has such a high moral tone! They talk of nothing but virtue! I have noticed if people talk too much of virtue it is exactly as if there is too strong a smell of pastiles in a sick-room; some very nasty operation must have been performed there! It is always suspicious! It was they, the Sipiágins, who ruined poor Alexéi.”

“And what about Solómin?” asked Mashúrina. She did not care to hear any more about Nejdánof from Páklin.

“Solómin!” exclaimed Páklin; “he is a splendid fellow. Escaped cleverly. He left the factory he was managing, and took all the best workmen away with him. There was one, by name Pável, a wonderful man, they say; he went with him too. Now he has set up a small place of his own, in the Government of Perm, on a co-operative system. That man will stick to his work! He will make his way! He has a long beak, and a strong one too. He is a fine fellow; and what is better, he does not set up to heal all social wounds in a minute. You see, we Russians are always waiting for some one or something to turn up which will cure all our sickness, pull out all ailments like a bad tooth. Who or what will this magician prove to be? Darwinism? The Commune? Arkhip Perepéntief? A foreign war? What you will, only for God’s sake, pull our tooth out! It is all from idleness, feebleness, want of thought! But Solómin is not like that—he does not pull out teeth—he is a fine fellow!”

Mashúrina waved her hand, as much as to say,—
“There, we have done with him!”

"And the girl," she asked—"I have forgotten her name—who was with Nejdánof?"

"Mariánna? But she is that same Solómin's wife. They have been married more than a year. At first, I believe, only in name, but now they say she is really his wife."

Mashúrina repeated her former gesture.

She had once been jealous of Mariánna, on account of Nejdánof; now she indignantly wondered how Mariánna could have been faithless to his memory?

"I suppose there is a baby?" she said, contemptuously.

"Perhaps; I do not know. But where are you going?" said Páklin, seeing Mashúrina take up her hat. "Wait a little; Snápotchka will give us some tea in a moment."

It was not so much that he wished to detain Mashúrina, as that he would not lose the occasion of pouring out all that had so long been accumulating in his mind. Since his return to Petersburg he had seen but few people, especially of the younger generation. The catastrophe which had led to Nejdánof's death had frightened him. He had become very prudent, and shunned all society; while the young people, on their part, looked at him with suspicion. One had even called him an informer to his face. With old people he did not care to associate, so he sometimes had to be silent for a week at a time. Before his sister he did not show off; not because he considered her incapable of understanding him; no! he ranked her intelligence very high. But with her he had to talk seriously and with absolute truth; as soon as he began to "flavour his talk—to bring out trumps," she would look at him with a peculiar, attentive, rather pitying gaze; and his conscience would prick him. But he could not do without trumping—even if it were only with the deuce,

he must trump! So, life in Petersburg had become somewhat dismal for Páklin, and he was beginning to think of trying Moscow. Ideas, reflections, intentions, epigrams, witty or spiteful, collected in his mind like water in a mill-pond when the mill is idle. He could not open the sluice, so the water became stagnant and putrid. Mashúrina appeared; he opened the sluice, and out flowed the stream of talk.

He abused Petersburg and its life, nay, the whole of Russia! He gave no quarter to any one or anything. All this had not the very smallest interest for Mashúrina, but she did not argue with him or interrupt him, and that was all he cared for.

"Yes," he said, "it is a delightful time, I have the honour to tell you. Society is at a standstill; every one is as dull as ditch-water. Literature is as flat as a bowling-green. As for criticism, if one of our foremost writers of the young generation wants to say that "a hen has the potential faculty of laying eggs," he must have twenty pages in which to expound this great truth, and even those twenty will hardly suffice! All these gentlemen, I tell you, are inflated like feather-beds, and foam at the mouth with the inspiration necessary to produce a commonplace. In science we certainly possess the learned Kant* on the collars of our engineers, ha! ha! And as for art, would you care to go and hear the national singer, Agremántski? He is immensely popular. Well, I tell you, if a carp stewed in porridge—yes, a carp in porridge—were to be endowed with the faculty of speech, its singing would exactly resemble that of this gentleman! And Skoropíkhin, you know, our eternal Aristarchus, praises him! None of your Western art this, he says; and he praises our wretched painters too! Once upon a time, he says, I too was enthusiastic about Europe, about the Italians, but I heard Rossini—

* Kant in Russian means a border.

phew! I saw Raphael—phew! And this, phew! is amply sufficient for our young people; so they repeat phew! after Skoropíkhin, and are perfectly satisfied. And meanwhile the misery among the people is fearful, the taxes have completely crushed them, and the only sign of progress is that the peasants wear caps and the women have given up their head-dress. While as for famine, and drunkenness, and usury . . .!”

Here Mashúrina yawned, and Páklin saw that he must change the conversation.

“You have not told me yet,” he said, turning to her, “where you have been during these last two years, and whether you have been back long, or what you have been doing, and how you have been transformed into an Italian, and”

“There is no need for you to know all that,” interrupted Mashúrina. Why should you? It is not your business now.”

Páklin seemed wounded, and to hide his confusion gave a short, unnatural laugh.

“Well, as you will,” he said. “I know that in the eyes of the present generation I am a laggard, and of course I cannot really rank myself as one of those. . . .” He did not finish his phrase. “Here is Snápotchka with our tea. Take a cup, and listen to me. Perhaps you may be interested in what I have to say.”

Mashúrina took a cup and a lump of sugar, and began to break off bits and put them into her mouth.

Páklin now gave a frank laugh.

“It is a good thing that the police is not here, or else the Italian countess of what?”

“Rocca di Santo Fiume,” said Mashúrina, with the most imperturbable gravity, as she drank the hot fluid.

“Rocca di Santo Fiume,” repeated Páklin, “who

drinks her tea with her sugar in her mouth. So extremely probable! The suspicions of the police could hardly fail to be aroused."

"There was a fellow in uniform," remarked Mashúrina, "who annoyed me at the frontier; he kept on asking me questions; at last I lost my temper, and said, 'Do get away from me, for goodness' sake!'"

"You said it in Italian?"

"No, in Russian."

"And what did he do?"

"He? He went away, of course."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Páklin. "Good for the contessa! Another cup? Well, I just wanted to say this to you. You spoke coldly of Solómin. Well, do you know what I am going to say? Such men as he are the real men. You do not see through them in a moment; but, believe me, they are the real men, and it is to them that the future belongs. They are not heroes; they are not even those 'heroes of toil,' about whom some eccentric American or Englishman wrote a book for the edification of us poor people; they are firm, grey, neutral-tinted men, and true Russians. And that is the only kind of man we need now. Look at Solómin, bright as the day, and yet sound as a roach. It is a miracle. For up to this time in Russia, if a man were really a living being, with feelings and consciousness, he was invariably sickly. Now Solómin's heart aches at the same things at which our hearts ache, and he hates the same things as we do: but his nerves are under command, and his body obeys him, as it should do. The result is—he is a fine fellow! a man with an ideal, yet guiltless of fine-sounding phrases; educated, yet belonging to the people; plain, yet perfectly clear-headed . . . what more do you want? And do not be led away," continued Páklin, growing more and more excited, and not noticing that Mashúrina

had long ceased listening to him, and was again staring away into vacancy—"do not be led away by the fact that we possess all kinds of strange people in Russia just now: Slavophiles, bureaucrats, single-barrelled generals and double-barrelled generals, Epicureans, imitators, and eccentricities (I knew a certain lady, Khavrónia Pry'stshova by name, who one fine day turned legitimist and assured all her friends that, if her body were opened after her death, they would find the name of Henri V. engraved on her heart—Khavrónia Pry'stshova's heart!) Do not be led away by all this, my dear lady, but let me tell you that our true national path is that on which the Solómins are going; simple, neutral-tinted, clever Solómins! And remember when it is that I am speaking; now, in the winter of 1870, when Germany is on the point of crushing France, when . . ."

"Sfloushka," said Snandúlia's quiet voice from behind his back, "I think that in your theories on the future you forget our religion and its influence . . . Besides which," she added hurriedly, "Miss Mashúrina is not listening to you . . . you had better offer her another cup of tea instead."

Páklin broke off.

"Yes, true; will you not have some more, Mashúrina?"

Mashúrina turned her dark eyes slowly on him and said thoughtfully,—

"I wanted to ask you, Páklin, if you have not by chance some writing of Nejdánof's, or his photograph?"

"I have his photograph; and I think a fairly good one. It is in the table-drawer. I will find it for you in a moment."

He began to hunt for it, while Snandúlia went up to Mashúrina, and looking long and fixedly at her with deep sympathy, shook her hand as if it were that of a fellow-sufferer.

"Here it is! I have it!" exclaimed Páklin, and gave her the photograph. Mashúrina put it hastily into her pocket, without looking at him or thanking him, but grew very red, and putting on her hat, made towards the door.

"Are you going?" said Páklin. "But at least tell me where you live."

"Nowhere in particular."

"I understand; you would rather I did not know. But please tell me one thing: are you still acting under the orders of Vasíli Nikoláevitch?"

"Why should you know?"

"Is it then some one else—Sidór Sidórovitch, perhaps?"

Mashúrina made no reply.

"Or is the direction anonymous?"

Mashúrina was crossing the threshold.

"It may be anonymous," she said, and slammed the door.

Páklin stood for some time without moving in front of the closed door.

"Anonymous Russia!" he at length said.

THE END.

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